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# DISSERTATIONS

## MORAL AND CRITICAL

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ON MEMORY AND IMAGINATION.

ON DREAMING.

THE THEORY OF LANGUAGE.

ON FABLE AND ROMANCE.

ON THE ATTACHMENTS OF KINDRED.

ILLUSTRATIONS ON SUBLIMITY.

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By JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D.

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AND SCIENCES.

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T O

T H E M O S T N O B L E

G E O R G E

Marquis and Earl of HUNTLY, &c.

M Y L O R D,

**T**H E D U C H E S S O F G O R D O N having conde-  
scended to read the greater part of these  
papers; and to say, that they may be useful to  
Young Persons, and that some things in them are  
not unworthy of Your attention; I am encouraged  
to make them publick, and have taken the liberty  
to inscribe them to Your Lordship.

To

544038  
ENGLISH

To regulate the principles, and form the taste, of Young Men, has been my employment, and favourite study, for many years. I cannot affirm, that my success has been equal to my wishes; for then it would have been great indeed: but I have the satisfaction to know, that my labour has not been vain. Let me, therefore, indulge the pleasing hope, that Your Lordship, when a little further advanced in life, will one day do me the honour to declare, that the following Discourses have afforded You some amusement, and that You approve of the sentiments conveyed in them. And, from that quickness of parts, gentleness of manners, and generosity of mind, which You inherit from Your Noble Parents, may I not presume, that the day is not far distant?

Of Your Noble Parents, My Lord, it is not easy for me to speak, without the warmest expressions of admiration and gratitude. But their virtues, and the obligations I am under to them, are subjects, whereon They do not permit me to expatiate. If They did, Truth would oblige me to declare what might perhaps incur the suspicion of flattery, and certainly

D E D I C A T I O N.      vii

tainly would of ostentation. Continue, My Lord, to be like Them : and You cannot fail to be a blessing to Your country, an ornament to Your high rank, and the delight of all who approach You ; the friend of the poor, the comforter of the afflicted, and the patron of honest industry.

I have the honour to be, with sincere affection,

My   L O R D,

Your Lordship's most humble

And most faithful Servant,

JANUARY I,  
1783.

JAMES BEATTIE.



P R E F A C E.

**H**AVING, for some years, by circumstances of a particular nature, known to my Friends, but of no importance to the Publick, been hindered from executing those more extensive plans of Moral Speculation, which I once projected; and being averse and unaccustomed to idleness; I thought I might amuse myself, in a way not wholly unprofitable to others, by transcribing and correcting certain papers, written a good while ago; which several persons, who had read them, were pleased to approve, and had advised me to publish. Some of these are contained in this volume: others may possibly appear hereafter. They were at first composed in a different form: being part of a Course of Prelections, read to those Young Gentlemen, whom it is my business to initiate in the Elements of Moral Science. This, I hope, will account for the plainness of the style; for the frequent introduction of practical and serious observations; for a more general use of the pronouns I and You than is perhaps quite proper in discourses addressed to the Publick; and for a greater variety of illustration, than would have been requisite, if my hearers had been of riper years, or more accustomed to abstract inquiry.

I have been desired to publish the whole system of Lectures: but am prevented by many considerations; and by this in particular, that such a work would be too voluminous, for my ability to perform, and for the patience of the Publick to endure. I therefore give only a few detached passages; and I beg they may be considered as separate and distinct Essays.

The Reader will be disappointed, if he expect to find in this book any nice metaphysical theories, or other matters of doubtful disputation. Such things the Author is not unacquainted with: but they suit not his ideas of Moral Teaching; and he has laid them aside long ago. His aim is, to inure young minds to habits of attentive observation; to guard them against the influence of bad principles; and to set before them such views of nature, and such plain and practical truths, as may at once improve the heart and the understanding, and amuse and elevate the fancy.

In the Dissertation on Language there are indeed some abstruse inquiries, that may seem to have little of a practical tendency. But the subtleties inseparable from that part of science are not, even in the early part of life, hard to be understood, when explained in a simple style, and with a due regard to the gradual expansion of the human intellect. To which I may add, that a philosophical examination of the principles of grammar is a most profitable exercise to the mental powers of young people; and promotes, more perhaps than any other study within their sphere, clearness of apprehension, and correctness of language.



# C O N T E N T S.

---

## Of Memory and Imagination.

|                       | Page |
|-----------------------|------|
| Introduction. — — — — | 1    |

### Of MEMORY.

#### C H A P. I.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Difference between Memory and Imagination. — | 5 |
|--|---|

#### C H A P. II.

##### Phenomena and Laws of Memory.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Sect. 1. <i>General account of this faculty. Whether we have reason to think it is connected with the brain.</i> — — — | 8  |
| Sect. 2. <i>The subject continued.—Laws of Memory.—Importance of Attention.</i> — — — —                                | 13 |
| Sect. 3. <i>The subject continued.—Artificial Memory. Of penmanship, as connected with this subject.</i> — —           | 21 |
| Sect. 4. <i>Different appearances of Memory—in different persons—and in the same person at different times.</i> — — —  | 29 |

#### C H A P. III.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Methods of improving Memory.—Attention.—Recollection.—Writing.—Conversation, &c.—Directions for committing Discourses to memory.—Whether Sermons should be recited from memory, or read. — — | 38 |
|--|----|

C O N T E N T S.

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| C H A P. IV.                                     |      |
| Remarks on the Memory of Brutes. — Inferences. — | 60   |

OF IMAGINATION.

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| C H A P. I.                           |    |
| General account of Imagination. — — — | 72 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| C H A P. II.  |     |
| Of the Association of ideas.  |     |
| Sect. 1. <i>Principles of Association.</i> — <i>First, Resemblance.</i> — <i>Secondly, Contrariety.</i> — <i>Thirdly, Nearness of situation.</i> — —  | 78  |
| Sect. 2. <i>Fourthly, The Relation of Cause and Effect.</i> — <i>Superstitions arising from this and the preceding principle.</i> — —   | 89  |
| Sect. 3. <i>The same subject.</i> — <i>Custom, an associating principle.</i> —  | 96  |
| Sect. 4. <i>Origin of our ideas of Beauty,</i> — <i>in COLOUR—in FIGURE—in ATTITUDE—in MOTION,</i> — <i>partly accounted for, from the influence of Custom, as an associating principle.</i> — <i>Beauty of Countenance—Standard of Beauty.</i> — — — | 110 |
| Sect. 5. <i>External Associations—Recapitulation.</i> — —   | 143 |

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| C H A P. III.              |     |
| Remarks on Genius. — — — — | 146 |

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| C H A P. IV.                       |     |
| Of Taste, and its Improvement. — — | 165 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| C H A P. V.   |     |
| The subject of Imagination resumed. — Some directions for the regulation of it. — — | 194 |

---

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Of DREAMING. — | 207 |
|----------------|-----|

C O N T E N T S.

The Theory of Language.

P A R T I.

Of the Origin and General Nature of Speech.

C H A P. I.

Page

Man, the only animal capable of Speech. — Speech, an art acquired by imitation. — Natural Signs of human thought. — Artificial signs of thought: — first, Visible; — secondly, Audible. — — 233

C H A P. II.

Of the organs of Speech, and the nature and powers of the human Voice. — Of Articulation. Vowel and Consonant Sounds — their formation, and various classes. Thirty-two or thirty-three elementary sounds in the English tongue. 246

C H A P. III.

The Alphabet imperfect, and Spelling irregular; but neither ought to be altered: — Pronunciation cannot be the standard of Orthography. — Of teaching the Deaf to speak. — Of Diphthongs, Syllables, Words. — Of long and short words. 260

C H A P. IV.

Of Emphasis, 1. Rhetorical. 2. Syllabick, which is either Long-vowelled, or Short-vowelled. — Of the Numbers or Measures of English Poetry, as depending on Emphasis; — their nature, and varieties. — — 274

C H A P. V.

Of Accent. Its nature and use. — Standard of Pronunciation. 293

# C O N T E N T S.

## C H A P. VI.

Page

Abfurdity of the Epicurean doctrine of the origin of language: men muft have fpoken in all ages; the firft man, by infpiration. — The variety of Original tongues, a proof of the Scripture history of Babel. — All languages have fome things in common; which it is the bufinefs of Univerfal Grammar to explain. — — — 300

## C H A P. VII.

Of the Art of Writing; its importance and origin. — Different forts of it practifed by different nations. — A fhort history of Printing. — — — 309

## P A R T II.

### Of Univerfal Grammar.

Introduction. — — — — 321

## C H A P. I.

### Of N O U N S.

Señt. 1. *Of Nouns Primary, or Substantives. — Of Number and Gender: which (taking thefe words in the Grammatical fenfe) depend, partly upon the nature of things, and partly upon custom and arbitrary rule.* — — — — 323

Señt. 2. *The nature and ufe of Nouns Secondary, or Pronouns.* 337

## C H A P. II.

### Of A T T R I B U T I V E S.

Señt. 1. *Of Attributives — Adjectives, Participles, Verbs. — Their diftinguifhing characters. — Comparison of Adjectives.* — 347

Señt. 2. *The fubject of Attributives continued. Of Verbs: — their general nature investigated, and expreffed in a definition. — Conjectures in regard to the Greek and Latin inflections.* — 363

## C O N T E N T S.

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| Sect. 3. <i>The subject continued. Of the Times or Tenses of verbs.—</i><br><i>Tenses, 1. Definite in time; 2. Indefinite in time, or Aorist:—</i><br><i>3. Complete in respect of action, or Perfect; 4. Incomplete, or Im-</i><br><i>perfect:— 5. Compound, uniting two or more times in one; 6. Sim-</i><br><i>ple, expressive of one time only. — Remarks. — —</i> | 380  |
| Sect. 4. <i>The subject continued. Of the Modes, or Moods, of verbs.—</i><br><i>Gerunds and Supines. — Species of verbs. —————</i>   | 414  |
| Sect. 5. <i>The subject continued. Further remarks on the Participle.</i>  | 433  |
| Sect. 6. <i>The subject of Attributives continued. Of Adverbs.</i>   | 442  |

### C H A P. III.

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| OF INTERJECTIONS. — | 451 |
|---------------------|-----|

### C H A P. IV.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Of Connectives and Articles. — —   | 456 |
| Sect. 1. <i>Of Connectives. — § 1. Of Prepositions.—Remarks on the</i><br><i>Cases of Nouns. — § 2. Of Conjunctions. —————</i> | 457 |
| Sect. 2. <i>Of the Article. —————</i>  | 485 |
| On Fable and Romance. — —  | 505 |
| On the Attachments of Kindred. —   | 575 |
| Illustrations on Sublimity. — —  | 605 |

## CORRECTIONS.

From pag. 5 to pag. 71, the running title  
should be OF MEMORY.

- Pag. 12. lin. 20. *read* twenty years  
90. — 10. — apprehension.  
275. — 22. — misapply  
364. — 3. *dele* fame  
395. — 26. *read* ineluctabile  
397. — 17. *dele* Again  
449. — 10. *read* succincte  
471. — 30. — Potior  
572. — 24. — whom the poet  
578. — 24. *dele* considered as  
586. — 30. *dele* and possible,  
592. — 12. *read* is the

OF  
MEMORY AND IMAGINATION.

---

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**I**F we were engrossed by corporeal things only, and never thought of attending to what passes in our minds, we should be in a great measure ignorant of the nobler part of our frame, as well as of those principles of morality and science, which are the glory of human nature, and the chief source of human happiness. Reflection, Consciousness, or Internal Sensation, is that faculty whereby we attend to our own thoughts, and to those various operations, which the mind performs without the aid of bodily organs. In seeing, we use the eye; in hearing, the ear; in smelling and tasting, the nose and tongue; and every part of our body is an instrument of touch: but, when we employ ourselves in recollection, invention, or investigation; when we exert our consciousness in regard to the feelings, pleasant or painful, that accompany our several passions and emotions; or when we meditate upon the morality of human conduct:—in these, and the like cases, the mind does not seem to act by the intervention of any bodily part: nay, of these, and other intellectual

telleſtual energies, we cannot but think, that a pure ſpirit may be much more capable than we. Accordingly, though mankind have at all times had a perſuaſion of the immortality of the ſoul, the reſurrection of the body is a doctrine peculiar to Chriſtianity, and met with no little oppoſition even in the Apoſtolick age: a proof, that, to mere human reaſon, it is more natural to think of the ſoul exiſting without the body, than to believe, that a re-union of theſe two ſubſtances after death is neceſſary to the happineſs and perfection of the former.

It is true, that the mind and the body do mutually and continually operate upon, and affect, each other. Reaſon is perverted by diſeaſe; nay, by the quantity and quality of what we eat and drink. Wounds on the head have impaired both the memory and the underſtanding. Anger, forrow, and other violent emotions of the mind, produce ſenſible and diſagreeable effects on the body: and cheerfulneſs and hope, benevolence and piety, are equally conducive to the welfare of our mental and corporeal frame. Intenſe thinking is apt to diſcompoſe the head and the ſtomach; and, if too long continued, may prove fatal to health, or even to reaſon. Extreme anxiety is ſaid to have changed the colour of the hair from black to white. Nay, it is well known, that, when certain evil humours predominate in the body, certain evil thoughts never fail to infeſt the ſoul; and that melancholy, and other ſorts of madneſs, may ſometimes be cured by phyſical applications. From theſe, and from many other facts of the ſame kind that might be mentioned, we may warrantably conclude, that, in the preſent life at leaſt, the mind, in the exerciſe even of theſe powers of reflection or conſciouſneſs, is not independent on the body. But we know, on what particular organs the ſoul depends for its knowledge of ſound and colour, taſte and ſmell: whereas, with what part of the body, Memory, for example, or Reaſon, or Imagination, is connected, we know not: neither can



we explain these faculties, by experiments made upon matter; or in any other way, than by attending to what passes in our minds.

This mode of attention seems to be one of those peculiarities that distinguish man from the inferior animals. Brutes see, and hear, and smell, and touch, and taste, no less acutely, and some of them more acutely, than we. But they are affected, only or chiefly, with outward things; and seem incapable of what we call reflection or consciousness. They sometimes look, as if they were thinking; but I know not, whether we ever see them act in consequence of having deliberated: their impulses to action are sudden, and appear for the most part to be the effect of some bodily sensation. To a certain degree they are docile, and acquire experience; but all is, or seems to be, the result of habit co-operating with instinct. Give a brute his food, the society of his fellows, and the means of security and rest; give him, in a word, those external things, which the inborn propensities of his nature require; and nothing can be wanting to his felicity: memory will not torment him with former evils, nor imagination with those that are to come. But, in the midst of affluence and peace, and with every thing to gratify corporeal sense, man is often wretched: the reflections of his mind, the consciousness of what he has done, the remembrance of past, and the anticipation of future calamity; to say nothing of the evil passions of pride, envy, and malevolence; may poison all the gifts of fortune, and make him sensible, that human happiness and misery depend upon the soul, and not upon the body; upon what we *think* (if I may so express myself), rather than upon what we *feel*. I will not say, however, that all the inferior animals are void of reflection. The more sagacious among them do give some faint indications of such a power: but they probably possess it in no higher degree, than is barely necessary to their preservation. Whereas, if we consider what sort of creature man would be, if he had no faculties but the

outward senses, we shall be satisfied, that from these internal powers both his dignity and his happiness arise.

Of these, as well as of the outward senses, there is considerable variety. Memory, Imagination, Reason, Abstraction, Conscience, are faculties of the human soul, as well as Hearing, Seeing, Touching, Tasting, and Smelling: the latter employed in perceiving, by means of bodily organs, material things and their qualities; the former exerted, with no dependence on the body that we can explain, in perceiving the human mind and its operations, and the ideas or thoughts that pass in succession before it.

Memory and Imagination are the objects of the present inquiry. In treating of them, I shall avoid all matters of nice curiosity; and confine myself to such as seem to promise amusement, and practical information.

---

## O F M E M O R Y .

**I**N the prosecution of this subject, I shall, first, mark the difference between Memory and Imagination: secondly, take notice of some of the more conspicuous laws and appearances of Memory: thirdly, propose rules for its improvement; and, fourthly, make some observations on the memory of brutes; and I shall conclude with a few inferences.

## C H A P. I.

## Difference between Memory and Imagination.

SOME philosophers refer to Memory all our livelier thoughts, and our fainter ones to Imagination: and so will have it, that the former faculty is distinguished from the latter by its superiour vivacity. We believe, say they, in Memory; we believe not in Imagination: now we never believe any thing, but what we distinctly comprehend; and that, of which our comprehension is indistinct, we disbelieve.—But this is altogether false. The suggestions of Imagination are often so lively, in dreaming, and in some intellectual disorders, as to be mistaken for real things; and therefore cannot be said to be essentially fainter than the informations of Memory. We may be conscious too of remembering that whereof we have but a faint impression. I remember to have read books, of which I cannot now give any account; and to have seen persons, whose features and visible appearance I have totally forgotten. Nor is it true, that we believe, or disbelieve, according to the vivacity, or the faintness, of our ideas. No man will say, that he has a distinct idea of eternity; and yet, every rational being must believe, that one eternity is past, and another to come. I have a livelier idea of Parson Adams, than of the impostor Mahomet; and yet I believe the former to be an imaginary character, and the latter to have been a real man. I read, not long ago, Vertot's *Revolutions of Sweden*, and the *Adventures of Tom Jones*: I believe the history, and I disbelieve the novel; and yet, of the novel I have a more lively remembrance, than of the history\*.

\* See an Essay on Truth, Part I. Chap. ii. Sect. 4.

Memory and Imagination, therefore, are not to be distinguished, according to the liveliness or faintness of the ideas suggested by the one, or by the other. The former may be faint, while the latter is lively : nay, a great Poet has observed, that,

Where beams of warm Imagination play,  
The Memory's soft figures melt away\* :

A maxim, which, though not always, will sometimes be found to hold true.—Besides, belief may be said to imply disbelief. If I believe the existence of Julius Cæsar, I disbelieve his non-existence. If I admit the history of that commander to be true, I reject every suspicion of its being false. And yet, of Julius Cæsar, and his actions, my ideas are equally clear, whether I believe or disbelieve. The faculties in question I would therefore distinguish in the following manner.

“ I *remember* to have seen a lion ; and I can *imagine* an elephant, “ or a centaur, which I have never seen : ”—he, who pronounces these words with understanding, *knows* the difference between the two faculties, though perhaps he may not be able to *explain* it. When we remember, we have always a view to real existence, and to our past experience ; it occurs to our minds, in regard to this thing which we now remember, that we formerly heard it, or perceived it, or thought of it † ; “ I remember to have seen a lion : ”—When we imagine, we contemplate a certain thought, or idea, simply as it is in itself, or as we conceive it to be, without referring it to past experience, or to real existence ; “ I can imagine such a figure as that “ of the elephant, though I have never seen one ; or a centaur, with

\* Pope's Essay on Criticism.

† Αει γὰρ ὅταν ἐνεργῇ κατὰ τὸ μνημονεύειν, ἄνωγ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ λέγει, ὅτι πρότερον τῆτο ἤκουσεν, ἢ ἤδιδε, ἢ ἐνόησεν. Aristot. de Memoria et Reminiscencia, cap. 1.

“ the head and shoulders of a man joined to the body of a horse, though I know that there is no such animal on earth.” I remember what has actually happened, and what, in consequence of my remembering, I believe to have happened: I can imagine a series of adventures, which never did, or which never can, happen. He who writes the history of his own life, or who compiles a narrative from the books he has read, is guided by the informations of Memory: he who composes a romance, puts those things in writing, which are suggested by his Imagination.

A friend describes an adventure, in which he says that he and I were engaged twenty years ago, and informs me of what I said and did on the occasion: I tell him, that I can distinctly imagine every thing he relates, but that I remember nothing of it. He mentions a circumstance, which on a sudden brings the whole to my memory. You are right, I then say; for now I remember it perfectly well. At first, I could only imagine the facts he spoke of: but, though I might believe his word, I could not recal any experience of mine, by which, in this particular case, it might be verified. But now, my memory informs me, that the adventure was real, and that I was an agent in it, and an eye-witness. Hence it appears, that in some cases Imagination may become Remembrance. And it may be further observed, that Remembrance will sometimes decay, till it be nothing more than Imagination: as when we retain the appearance of an object, without being able to affirm with certainty, where we perceived, or whether we ever perceived it: a state of mind, which one is conscious of, when one says, “ I either saw such a thing, or I dreamed of it.”

## C H A P. II.

## Phenomena and Laws of Memory.

## S E C T. I.

*General account of this Faculty.—Whether we have reason to think that it is connected with the Brain.*

**I** PROCEED, in the second place, to take notice of some of the more remarkable phenomena of Memory.

This is a faculty, which, if it were less common, and we equally qualified to judge of it, would strike us with astonishment. That we should have it in our power to recal past sensations and thoughts, and make them again present, as it were : that a circumstance of our former life should, in respect of us, be no more ; and yet occur to us, from time to time, dressed out in colours so lively, as to enable us to examine it, and judge of it, as if it were still an object of sense :—these are facts, whereof we every day have experience, and which, therefore, we overlook as things of course. But, surely, nothing is more wonderful, or more inexplicable. If thoughts could occupy space, we might be tempted to think, that we had laid them up in certain cells or repositories, to remain there till we had occasion for them. But thoughts cannot occupy space ; nor be conceived to have any other existence, than what the mind gives them by meditating upon them. Yet, that which has been long forgotten, nay, that which we have often endeavoured in vain to recollect, will sometimes, without any effort of ours, occur to us, on a sudden, and, if I may so speak, of its own accord. A tune, for example, which I hear to-day, and am pleased with, I perhaps endeavour to

remember to-morrow, and next day, and the day following, without success: and yet, that very tune shall occur to me, a month after, when my mind is taken up with something else. Where, if I may ask the question, were my ideas of this tune, when I wished to recollect them, and could not? How comes it, that they now present themselves, when I am not thinking of them at all? These questions no man can answer: but the fact is certain.

Often, when we do not immediately call to mind what we wish to remember, we set ourselves, as it were, to search for it; we meditate on other things or persons, that seem to be like it, or contrary to it, or contiguous\*, or to bear any other relation to what we are in quest of; and thus, perhaps, we at last remember it. This continued effort of voluntary remembrance is called Recollection. It resembles the procedure of those, who, missing something valuable, look for it in every place where they think they might have been when they dropped it; and thus recover what they had lost. For the last mentioned fact it is easy to account. A jewel, or a piece of coin, is a visible, tangible, and permanent thing, and must remain in its place till it be removed: and, if we come to that place, and examine it with attention, we can hardly fail to find what we are in quest of. But, where a thought should be, when it is forgotten; how it should have any permanency or any existence, when it is no longer in the mind; and what should restore it to our memory, after a long interval of forgetfulness; are points, whereon human wisdom can determine nothing.

Is it not wonderful, that old men should remember more accurately what happened fifty years ago, than the affairs of last week? And yet that, in many cases, our remembrance of any fact should

\* Διὸ καὶ τὸ ἐφεξῆς θηρούμεν νοήσαντες ἀπὸ τῆ νῦν, ἢ ἄλλῃ τινοῦ, καὶ ἀφ' ὁμοίου, ἢ εὐαντίου, ἢ τῶ συνείργου. διὰ τῆτο γὰρ ἡ ἀναμνησις.

Aristot. de Memoria et Reminiscentia, cap. 2.

be accurate in proportion to its recency? It may be said, indeed, that the more we attend, the better we remember; and that old men are forgetful of those things only, to which they are inattentive; for that not one of them ever forgot the place where he had deposited his money. All this is true, as Cicero remarks in his book on Old Age: but how we come to remember that best, to which we are most attentive, we can no otherwise explain, than by saying, that such is the law of our nature.

To account for this, and other phenomena of Memory, by intermediate causes, many authors, both ancient and modern, were fain to suppose, that every thing perceived by us, whether a thought of the mind, or an external object, every thing, in a word, that we remember, makes upon the brain a certain impression, which, remaining for some time after, is taken notice of by the mind, and recognized, as the mark of that particular sensation or idea; and that this sensation or idea, thus obtruded upon us anew, gives rise to remembrance. They supposed further, that attention to the thing perceived deepens this impression, and, consequently, makes it more durable; while that, to which we slightly attend, makes but a slight impression that soon wears out. When the brain itself is disordered, by disease, by drunkenness, or by other accidents, these philosophers are of opinion, that the impressions are disfigured, or instantly erased, or not at all received; in which case, there is either no remembrance, or a confused one: and they think, that the brains of old men, grown callous by length of time, are, like hard wax, equally tenacious of old impressions, and unsusceptible of new. Many plausible things may indeed be said, for solving the difficulties above mentioned, if we will only admit this theory. But it must, notwithstanding, be rejected; and that for several good reasons.

The human brain is a bodily substance; and sensible and permanent impressions made upon it must so far resemble those made

on



on sand by the foot, or on wax by the seal, as to have a certain shape, length, breadth, and deepness. Now such an impression can only be made by that, which has solidity, magnitude, and figure. If then we remember thoughts, feelings, and sounds, as well as things visible and tangible, which will hardly be denied; those sounds, thoughts, and feelings, must have body, and, consequently, shape, size, and weight. What then is the size or weight of a sound? Is it an inch long, or half an inch? Does it weigh an ounce, or a grain? Does the roar of a cannon bear any resemblance to the ball, or to the powder, in shape, in weight, or in magnitude? What figure has the pain of the toothach, and our remembrance of that pain? Is it triangular, or circular, or of a square form? The bare mention of these consequences may prove the absurdity of the theories that lead to them.

Moreover; supposing impressions to be made on the brain, I would ask, *how* the mind perceives them, and why at one time more than at another? Does the human soul go up to the *pia mater*, as a housewife does to her garret, only at certain times? Or, if she make it her place of abode, are there any corners of it which she is unacquainted with, or neglects to look into? Nay, admitting this supposition, we should be apt to conclude, from the facts already specified, that some of these impressions do occasionally force themselves into notice, when the soul is differently employed; and that she often looks for others, without being able to find them, as if they were lost, or mislaid.—To all which we may add, that the theory in question ought not to find a place in philosophy, because incapable of proof from experience; it being impossible, with bodily eyes, to discover, in what way the human brain may be affected by thinking and perceiving.—And therefore, without employing more time in vain inquiries after the *cause* of remembrance,

let us be satisfied, if, from what we certainly know of this faculty, we can propose any rules for its improvement.

But, before I proceed to a more particular account of its appearances and laws, it may be proper to remark, that a sound state of the brain does in fact seem to be necessary to the right exercise of Memory, as well as of our other intellectual powers. Memory is often suspended during sleep, and is also impaired by distemper, by old age, and by sudden and violent accidents. Thucydides, in his account of the plague at Athens, relates, that some persons survived that dreadful disease, with such a total loss of memory, that they forgot their friends, themselves, and every thing else. I have read of a person, who, falling from the top of a house, forgot all his acquaintance, and even the faces of his own family; and of a learned author, who, on receiving a blow on the head by a folio dropping from its shelf, lost all his learning, and was obliged to study the alphabet a second time. There goes a story of another great scholar, who, by a like accident, was deprived, not of all his learning, but only of his Greek.—One may question some of these facts: but what follows is certainly true. I know a clergyman, who, upon recovering from a fit of apoplexy about sixteen years ago\*, was found to have forgotten all the transactions of the four years immediately preceding; but remembered as well as ever what had happened before that period. The newspapers of the time were then a great amusement to him; for almost every thing he found in them was matter of surprise: and, during the period I speak of, some very important events had taken place, particularly the accession of his present Majesty, and many of the victories of the last war. By degrees he recovered what he had lost; partly by the spontaneous revival of his memory, and partly by information. He is still

\* It was, I think, in the year 1761.

alive,

alive, though old and infirm; and as intelligent as people of his age commonly are.—I may further mention, that I have several times in my life been in a swoon: twice, as I remember, by falls from a horse; and once, on going suddenly to a great fire, from the damp air of a winter night: and that, on each occasion, I observed, as others in like cases have done, that, when I recovered, I had utterly forgotten what happened just before the deliquium came on, and was not a little surpris'd when the persons present told me of the circumstances. A like failure of Memory I have once and again been conscious of, when awake and in health, on being startled at some alarming incident.—These facts prove, that our soul and body are closely united, and do mutually affect each other; and that, by disorders in the brain and other contiguous parts, the intellectual powers may be discomposed. But from these facts we are not warranted to infer, either that the brain is the organ of Memory, or that impressions are made on it by what we externally or internally perceive; or that, supposing them to be made, they are at all necessary to remembrance.

## S E C T. II.

*The Subject continued.—Laws of Memory.—Importance of Attention.*

THE most lively remembrance is not so lively as the sensation from which it is derived: and, for the most part, Memory becomes more faint, as the original sensation becomes more remote in time. What I saw last year, I remember more distinctly than what I did not see these seven years. This, however, is not always the case. Old men can give a more exact account of what happened in their youth, than of more recent events. And any man remembers better the face of a dear friend whom he has not seen for many days, than that of an indifferent stranger whom he chanced to see yesterday. Of the books, too, which we read, and of the narratives which we hear, every one knows, that some we forget immediately, and that others we retain long.

That is likely to be long remembered, which at its first appearance affects the mind with a lively sensation, or with some pleasurable or painful feeling. Thus we remember more exactly what we have seen, than what we have only heard of; and that which awakened any powerful emotion, as joy, sorrow, wonder, surprize, love, indignation, than that which we beheld with indifference. Here we discern the reason of a cruel piece of policy, which is said to be practised in some communities, and was once, I believe, in this; that of going round the lands once a year, and at every landmark scourging one or two boys, who were taken along for that purpose. For it was presumed, that those boys could never forget the places where they had suffered pain; and would of course be able, when grown up, or grown old, to give testimony concerning the boundaries,

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if any dispute should arise on that subject. We all know the difference between a discourse or narrative which we forget as soon as we hear, and one that leaves a lasting impression. The former gives no entertainment, and awakens no passion: the latter amuses with a variety of examples and images, or by the force or beauty of the style; or gives rise to wonder, hope, fear, pity, laughter, or other lively emotions.

The antient moralists were at pains to illustrate their precepts by examples, parables, and other allusions to things external. This made the hearer both understand their meaning, and retain it: for in those days, recourse could seldom be had to books; and it was necessary for the people to remember what was delivered to them, if they intended to profit by it. Religious, political, and moral doctrines, when enforced by facts and apposite examples, lose their abstract nature, and become, as it were, objects of sense; and so engage attention, are easily understood, make a deep impression upon the mind, and produce a durable remembrance. This ought to be carefully attended to, by those whose business it is to instruct mankind by speaking to them. What is written is permanent, and may be reviewed at leisure; but what is addressed to the ear is immediately gone; and, if it take no hold of the Memory, is good for nothing.

The force wherewith any thing strikes the mind, is generally in proportion to the degree of attention we bestow upon it. And therefore, what we attend to, is better remembered, than what we consider superficially. Inattentive people have always bad memories. At least, their memory is bad in regard to those things to which they are inattentive:—for there is no person of a sound mind, who has not some pursuit, and some favourite sphere of observation. If our attention is engaged by matters of importance; by the duties and decorums of life; by historical facts; by philosophical researches;  
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by the trade, manufactures, and other political concerns of our country; our Memory will be stored with matters of importance: but if we are captivated by trifles only, we shall remember only trifles. It is therefore of great moment, that the views and attentions of young people be properly directed. Where parents are given to foolish talk, or insipid story-telling, children often acquire the same propensity. For it is certain, that the bent of the genius is partly determined by those early habits of attention or inattention, whereby the memory is either enriched with what is valuable, or encumbered with what is frivolous.

The great art of Memory is attention. Without this, one reads, and hears, to no purpose. And we shall be more or less profited by what we read or hear, as the objects of our attention are more or less important. To read in haste, or without reflecting on what we read, may amuse a vacant hour, but will never improve the understanding. And therefore, while we peruse a good author, let us, from time to time, lay the book aside, and propose to ourselves the following queries. What is it this author aims at? What is his general plan? How far has he proceeded in his subject? If I were to give without book a summary of the last chapter, how should I express myself? Is the author quite clear and satisfactory in what he has hitherto advanced? If he is not, what are his principal defects? How much of his subject is still before him? From what I know of his plan, of the parts he has already gone through, of his principles, and of his method of illustration, may I not form conjectures in regard to what is to follow?—It is this sort of intellectual exercise, that improves both the Memory and the Judgment, and makes reading equally agreeable and beneficial.—And, in like manner, after hearing a discourse, or bearing a part in conversation, it may be of use to recollect the heads of it: taking care to treasure up those sentiments that were remarkable for their truth or beauty, or that

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came recommended by the piety or benevolence of the speaker; and overlooking every levity, sophistry, and ill-natured observation, that seemed to betray depravity of principle, or hardness of heart. By cherishing habits of Attention, and of Recollection, in the various circumstances of life, the mind is continually improved; but idleness, inadvertence, and inaccuracy, extinguish genius, and eradicate virtue.

When we are engrossed by a multiplicity of affairs, new objects command but a slight Attention, unless they be very striking. And therefore, those things are most attended to, and best remembered, which occur when the mind is at ease, and unemployed; as in the early part of life, or in the morning. Hence, that is well remembered, of which we have had a previous expectation: for this disengages the mind from other concerns, and prepares us to attend to that which we look for, as soon as it shall appear. When, therefore, we take up a book, with a view to profit by it, we ought to lay all other business aside, and prevent, as much as possible, the intrusion of impertinent ideas. This will not only assist Memory, but also give such a variety to our thoughts as may prove very salutary to the soul. For the same train of thinking too long pursued is often detrimental to health, and sometimes even to reason.

The rule here hinted at should never, on any occasion, be forgotten. It is a matter of no small importance, that we acquire the habit of doing only one thing at one time: by which I mean, that while employed on any one object our thoughts ought not to wander to another. When we go from home in quest of amusement, or to the fields for the sake of exercise, we shall do well to leave all our speculations behind: if we carry them with us, the exercise will fatigue the body without refreshing it; and the amusement, instead of enlivening, will distract, the soul: and, both in

the one case, and in the other, we shall confirm ourselves in those habits of inattention, which, when long persisted in, form what is called an *absent man*. In conversation too, let us always mind what is saying and doing around us, and never give the company ground to suspect, that our thoughts are elsewhere. Attention is a chief part of Politeness. An absent man, provided he is good-natured, may be born with, but never can be agreeable. He may command our esteem, if we know him to be wise and virtuous; but he cannot engage our love. For inattention implies negligence, and neglect often proceeds from contempt: if, therefore, we find that we are not attended to, we shall fancy that we are neglected, and to a certain degree despised: and how is it possible to repay contempt with kindness! And when unkindness and dissatisfaction prevail in any society, all the comforts of it are at an end.—Besides, if we are not strictly observant of every thing that passes in company, we cannot be either amused by it, or instructed: in other words, we deprive ourselves of much innocent pleasure, and useful information. For a great deal of our best knowledge is obtained by mutual intercourse: and for the most valuable comforts of life we are indebted to the social and benevolent attentions of one another.

But, must one mind the insipid prattle of those who can neither instruct, nor entertain?—Provided it be inoffensive, I answer, Yes: particularly, if they are, by their rank, or sex, or age, or other circumstances, entitled to more than ordinary regard. Avoid their company, if you please, and as much as you conveniently can; but, when you are in it, be attentive and civil. If you are, you contribute to their happiness, which it is your duty to do; and you ensure their good-will, which is better than their hatred: you may, at the same time, improve yourself in benevolence and patience; you contract no evil habits of inattention; you will find



entertainment in the discovery of their characters, and so enlarge your acquaintance with the human heart; and it will be strange indeed, if you do not gather something from them, which may either inform by its novelty, or divert by its singularity.

Let it not be objected, that some great men, as Newton, have been remarkably absent in company. Persons, who are engaged in sublime study, and who are known to employ their time and faculties in adorning human nature by the investigation of useful truth, may be indulged in such peculiarities of behaviour, as in men of common talents neither are, nor ought to be, tolerated. For, in regard to the former, we are willing to suppose, that, if they overlook us, it is because they are engrossed by matters of greater importance: but this is a compliment, which we should not think ourselves obliged to pay the latter, at least in ordinary cases. And I scruple not to say, that it would have been better for Newton himself, as well as for society, if he had been free from the weakness abovementioned. For then, his thoughts, and his amusements would have been more diversified, and his health probably better, and his precious life still longer than it was: and a mind like his, fully displayed in free and general conversation, would have been, to all who had the happiness to approach him, an inexhaustible source of instruction and delight.

If, therefore, we wish to have a due regard for others, or for ourselves, let us endeavour to acquire a habit of strict Attention at all times, and in all circumstances; of Attention, I mean, to that, whatever it is, in which we happen to be engaged. It is true, that some of our customary actions may be well enough performed, even when we are thinking of something else. We may put on our clothes, or (when alone) eat our victuals, or play an easy tune on a musical instrument, and our mind be all the while taken up with other matters. But this we ought not to do often, lest

we contract a habit of doing it ; which will be, as far as it goes, a habit of Inattention, and therefore faulty ; and which, though it take its rise from trivial things, may gain upon us, till it come to affect our behaviour in things of moment.

Great, indeed, and many are the advantages of habitual Attention. Clearness of understanding, extensive knowledge, and exact memory, are its natural consequences. It is even beneficial to health, by varying the succession of our ideas and sensations ; and it gives us the command of our thoughts, and enables us at all times to act readily, and with presence of mind. As 'they who live retired are disconcerted at the sight of a stranger ; as he whose body has never been made pliant by exercise cannot perform new motions either gracefully or easily ; so the man, who has contracted a habit of ruminating upon a few things and overlooking others, is fluttered, and at a loss, whenever he finds himself, as he often does, in unexpected circumstances. He looks round amazed, like one raised suddenly from sleep. Not remembering what happened the last moment, he knows nothing of the cause of the present appearance, nor can form any conjecture with respect to its tendency. If you ask him a question, it is some time before he can recollect himself so far as to attend to you ; he hesitates, and you must repeat your words before he understand them : and when he has with difficulty made himself master of your meaning, he cannot, without an effort, keep out of his usual track of thinking, so long as is necessary for framing an explicit reply. This may look like exaggeration ; but nothing is more certain, than that habits of Inattention, contracted early, and long persisted in, will in time form such a character.

## S E C T. III.

*The Subject continued.—Artificial Memory.—Of Penmanship, as connected with this Subject.*

**I**T is difficult to commit to Memory what we do not understand. The effort is unnatural, as well as unprofitable. How cruel then, to compel children to get 'by heart long sermons, and metaphysical systems of theology, which, even if they were grown up, they would perhaps find to be above their reach! When young persons have their minds thus loaded with words to which they cannot affix any meaning, they contract either a dislike to literature, or a habit of reading without any attempt to understand: and sometimes, their tender faculties, being overstrained, lose their native vigour; and parents, and teachers, equally astonished and disappointed, discover, when it is too late, that the child, instead of improving in wisdom, becomes every day more and more an idiot. The Memory of children ought no doubt to be exercised from the beginning, that it may grow in strength, and be stored with knowledge suited to their years. But let their tasks be proportioned to their ability, and their attention directed to such things as they may easily comprehend; to the principles of grammar, the elements of natural and civil history, the plainest doctrines of morality and religion, to elegant pronunciation, and correctness of speech and writing. By this management, their faculties will ripen, and their love of knowledge increase, and, as their fancy will be continually amused, their studies can never prove detrimental to health. For children are by nature inquisitive; and passionately fond of what is new. So that, if some degree of  
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literary ardour is not raised within them, there is, in all ordinary cases, more reason to blame the teacher for want of skill, than the scholar for want of capacity.

Sensations, that bring pleasure or pain, or give rise to any passion, do easily imprint themselves on the mind; as was already observed. To which we may add, that such as are indifferent may be long remembered, if they are often repeated. Children soon make this discovery for themselves; and, when preparing their lesson, repeat over and over those parts of it, which they wish to commit to Memory. These repetitions fix the attention, keep other thoughts at a distance, produce a habit of arranging the words in a certain order, and make the sense familiar to the understanding.

Every one must have observed, that the thoughts of his mind are apt to follow each other in a train; and that between those which are contiguous there is for the most part some connection, either natural, or established by custom. They often arise in the mind in the order in which the original perceptions were received. Any part of a tune occurring to the Memory will naturally introduce the following notes in their order. The beginning of a sentence with which we are acquainted puts us in mind of the sequel: and teachers prompt the Memory of the scholar, by pronouncing the first letter or syllable of the word, on which he hesitates. If we have at any time considered two or more things as connected, that very circumstance will establish a connection between them; so as that the remembrance, or the view, of the one, will make us think of the other. Thus we may have seen a child put a thread about his finger, to keep him in mind of a commission; and Quintilian tells us, that, for the same purpose, a Roman would turn the stone of his ring inward to the palm of his hand. If we think of a place which we know, in the town or country, we shall be  
apt

apt at the same time, or immediately after, to remember the adjacent places, the persons who live there, and any remarkable events that may have happened in that neighbourhood.

On this law of our nature was founded a curious invention, frequently spoken of by the old rhetoricians, under the name of the Artificial Memory; whereof both Quintilian and Cicero have given an account, but neither of them so distinctly as could be wished. In those days, publick orations were either extemporary, or recited from Memory: and as some of these last were very long, orators found it requisite to devise a method of ordering the several parts in such a manner, as that they might all be remembered in their proper connection and place. For the art I speak of seems to have been intended to facilitate the remembrance, not so much of the words of an harangue, as of its heads, or topicks, or other subordinate divisions.

For this purpose, they arranged in their Memory a number of contiguous places wherewith they were well acquainted; the apartments of a house, for example, or the buildings in a street: and, by long meditating on this set of places in a certain order, they came at last, on thinking of the first, to remember all the rest successively, each in its own situation. And it was necessary, that this habit of recollecting the places, readily, and without omission or confusion, should be so thoroughly established, as that there might be no risque of its ever being lost or impaired: for, as Quintilian observes, that Remembrance must be something more than firm, which is to serve as a support or basis to another Remembrance. The orator then formed a kind of imaginary connection between these several places, and the several heads of the discourse which he intended to deliver; between the first place, and the first head; the second place, and the second head; and so forward: and he revolved this imaginary connection in his mind, till the

The idea of each place suggested that of the head associated with it: and, as the order of the places was fixed in the Memory, the order of the topicks was by this contrivance made equally permanent, and was with equal ease and certainty recollected. And hence, the several heads of a discourse were called Places or Topicks: and, in allusion to the same practice, we still say, In the first place, In the second place, In the third place.

In the places thus appropriated to the artificial Memory (supposing them the apartments of a house) there would be moveables; as statues and pictures in one, warlike weapons in another, tables and couches in a third: or, if they did not admit of such furniture, it would be easy for the orator to allot to each place (whatever it was) a certain number of symbols, or figures, or names, ranged in a certain manner. And thus, the subdivisions of the several heads of his harangue, and even particular sentiments in each subdivision, might be imprinted on his mind by a similar mode of arrangement; the moveables, figures, or symbols, being disposed in a certain order, that order fixed in the Memory, and particular subdivisions and sentiments associated with them.

This seems to have been the nature of the Artificial Memory.— But, as was already observed, the accounts we have of it from the rhetoricians are not clear; and I am in doubt whether I understand them. If what is here said be just, I cannot but think, with Quintilian, that the art was too complex, and that Memory may be improved by easier methods.

What is agreeable to our own sentiments, inclinations, way of life, or course of study, we remember more easily than what is not so; because we understand it better, and enter into it with a keener curiosity. Hence our own compositions, and the events that have happened to ourselves, or our friends, or to persons of our profession, take faster hold of our Memory, than those in which

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we are not so particularly interested. A fact relating to agriculture makes a deep impression upon the husbandman; but is immediately forgotten by the mariner, or by the foldier, whose memory, however, is not less tenacious of maritime or military affairs. Most defects in Memory are owing to inattention. Could we attend to, and take a concern in, all topicks that occur in books, and in conversation, we should possess what might be called an universal Memory. If our attentions are confined to a few things, the sphere of our Remembrance will be narrow.

And here, I must blame some well-meaning parents and teachers, for desiring children, when they go to church, or hear the scripture read, to be careful to remember a *note*, that is, a sentence or short passage. The consequence is, that the child directs his whole attention to some one phrase, and disregards all the rest. And so, in order to make him retain a single aphorism, which perhaps he does not understand, and which he will probably forget before next morning, he is in a manner required by authority to be inattentive to what he hears; notwithstanding that he is told it is of the utmost importance. Would it not be better, to recommend to him a general and uniform attention; and, when he is to give an account of what he has heard, rather to exercise his judgment, and assist his Memory, by apposite questions in the Socratick method, than to insist on his repeating a number of words in the exact form in which he heard them?

The more relations, or likenesses, that we find, or can establish, between objects, the more easily will the view of one lead us to recollect the rest. Verse we remember better than prose, because of the relation in measure, as well as in sense, that the words of the former bear to one another; and rhyme better than blank verse, because lines in rhyme bear to one another a relation in sound, as well as in sense and measure. Horace tells us, that in some coun-

tries laws were antiently written in verse; in order, no doubt, that they might be the more easily remembered. And it is observable, that many of those common proverbs, which every body remembers, have measure; that several of them have rhyme; and that, in some, there is a sameness of sound in the initial letters of the words that compose them. Every coincidence of this kind is favourable to Memory\*.

The more senses we employ in perceiving things, the more easily will those things be remembered. Thus, to read aloud, and with propriety, if we are accustomed to it, facilitates the remembrance of what we read, conveying it to the mind by the ear, as well as by the eye: but, if we are not accustomed to it, the sound of our voice, and the fear of going wrong, will withdraw our attention, and prevent remembrance. Transcription is also, in many cases, favourable to Memory. And if we transcribe slowly, in good order, in distinct paragraphs, without contractions, with a scrupulous nicety in punctuation and spelling, and with a reasonable distance between the lines, we shall have a better chance to remember what we write, than if we were to throw it together confusedly, and in haste. For by all these means attention is quickened, and the original impression made more lively.

And here, though fashion should determine against me, I will endeavour, on rational principles, to lay down some rules, in regard to that mode of penmanship, which I conceive to be most expedient for those, who write with a view to ascertain their knowledge, and improve their minds.

I take it for granted, that those handwritings are the best, which are most durable and distinct, which do not occupy too much room, and may be performed with expedition: and that one is

\* See Bishop Lowth's learned Dissertation prefixed to his Isaiah.

better,



better, or worse, as it partakes more, or less, of these qualities. Upon this principle, I must blame, in the fashionable hands, all those flourishes, that either require time, or mix with any other part of the writing; all those heads and tails of letters, which are so long as to interfere with one another; and all those hair-strokes (as they are called) which are so fine as to be hardly visible, or which require too great nicety in cutting the pen. Letters, that rise and fall obliquely are not so distinct as those of an erect form: and all individual letters I would consider as blameable, which are known from their situation, but would not be known if they stood alone. What we call the body of the letter, by which I mean that part of it, which neither rises above, nor falls below the line, ought in my opinion to be erect, or nearly so; of a square figure, only a little narrower from right to left, than from top to bottom; and of a size equal, at least, to that of large print. Those parts of the letter, which rise above, or fall below the line, should be no longer than the body of the letter, that is, no longer than the line is broad: and something more than the breadth of two lines should be the space between the lines, that the heads or tails of one row of letters may not touch those of another; and that a little room may be left for interlineation, if that should be necessary. Let the lines be perfectly straight, and of an uniform breadth; let the points be accurately marked, and the words properly separated: and though some strokes of the pen may, and indeed must, be finer than others, there should be no greater disproportion, than is commonly seen in elegant printing. In a word, I would make the Roman printed letter the archetype, or pattern, of the written one: that being the most distinct, and one of the most beautiful characters I know; and withal so simple in the form as to have nothing superfluous; and yet so diversified, as that one letter can never be mistaken for another. I do not mean, that the writer

should imitate this character exactly. There must be more roundness in his strokes, and more frequent joinings of one letter with another: and some of the Roman characters, as a and g, are not easily made with the pen, and therefore should not be attempted. But I would have the penman consider the Roman alphabet as the standard: and if, between that and the present fashionable handwriting, he can hit the just medium, he will come near to realise my idea; and his work will have the distinctness and durability of print, and will at the same time admit of all necessary speed in the execution. Nay, of the correctness of the composition, when thus written, he will be a more competent judge, than of that of ordinary manuscripts, because he will more clearly perceive what is written: and his Memory will be assisted by the vivacity of the sensation it conveys to the eye, as well as by the distinct ideas it imparts to the understanding.

## S E C T. IV.

*Different Appearances of Memory—in different Persons,—and in the same Person at different Times.*

THE appearances of Memory are not the same in all men, nor in the same man at all times. Instances are recorded of extraordinary Memory. Themistocles made himself master of the Persian language in one year; and could call by their names all the citizens of Athens, whose number was twenty thousand. Cyrus knew the name of every soldier in his army; Crassus spoke every dialect of the Greek tongue; and Julius Cesar could dictate to three secretaries at once, on three different subjects. Portius Latro, as we learn from Seneca, his intimate friend, remembered every thing that he committed to writing, though he wrote with the greatest rapidity; and never forgot a word of what he had once remembered. The same author relates, that Cineas, who had gone to Rome as ambaffador from king Pyrrhus, did, on the day after his arrival, though he had never been there before, salute every senator, and a great number of the Roman people, by their names: that another person, whose name is not recorded, on hearing a poet read a new poem, claimed it as his own, and, for a proof, rehearsed it from beginning to end, which the real author could not do: and that Hortensius, after sitting a whole day at a publick sale, gave an account from Memory, in the evening, of all the things sold, with the prices; and the names of the purchasers; and that this account, when compared with what had been taken in writing by a notary, was found to be exact in every particular. I might also mention the noted story of the mathematician Wallis, who,  
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in bed, and with his eyes shut, extracted the cube root from a number consisting of thirty figures. Such force of Memory is wonderful: but, as an ingenious author observes \*, we have no more reason to repine at the want of it, than at our not having the strength of Samson, or the swiftness of Achilles. If, in the distribution of good, our share be equal to that of most other men, it becomes us to be content and thankful. In fact, though some men have no great capacity for that sort of learning which is found in books; there are few, whose Memory is not equal to all the common affairs of life; and there is not, perhaps, one rational being, whose Memory is unsusceptible of improvement.

Some men of good understanding complain of the weakness of their Memory: perhaps, because they forget many things they wish to remember; or find themselves deficient in the knowledge of that to which in the early part of life they were inattentive. And sometimes, no doubt, this may be affectation: for there are people in the world, who would have us believe, that their knowledge is derived rather from their own sagacity, than from the information of other men. But in fact, no person of good sense can with reason complain of any great natural defect in this way. For, without experience and knowledge, it is impossible, in the common affairs of life, either to act, or to think aright; and, where Memory is preternaturally defective, experience and knowledge will be deficient in proportion; and imprudent conduct and absurd opinion are the necessary consequence.

But, though to soundness of judgment Memory be essential, it does not follow, that they who have great Memory have always sound judgment. Extraordinary powers of Remembrance are sometimes coupled with a childish understanding. I have heard a

\* Idler. Numb. 74. — Other examples of extraordinary Memory, see Plin. Hist. vii. 24.

boy, whose faculties were in other respects rather below the ordinary pitch, repeat the greatest part of a sermon after once hearing it. In the early part of youth, and long before judgment is mature, the Memory is often very tenacious, even when no pains has been taken to improve it: and there are instances of men, who, by reading too much, and overloading their Memories, have fallen into a state of weakness, little short of insanity. That too much learning *may* make one mad, is an old opinion; and examples are not wanting to justify it, even at this day.

Yet neither, on the other hand, is extraordinary Memory any proof of a defective understanding. Themistocles, Cesar, Cicero, Seneca, and many others that might be mentioned, were men of the greatest abilities, as well as of very great Memory. Perhaps it will be found, that without extraordinary Memory there is seldom or never extraordinary genius; but that great genius does not always accompany great Memory.

Aristotle is careful to ascertain the difference between Remembrance and Recollection; or (what may be called) Passive and Active Memory. He maintains, that all animals, who are conscious of time, have the former; but that, of the latter, man is the only known animal who is capable; for that Recollection implies investigation, and several other efforts of rationality. And he remarks, I believe justly, that men, who excel in Passive Remembrance only, are for the most part of slow capacity; but that they, who have in a great degree the talent of Recollection, are of quick parts, and docile\*.

Some men have a talent for remembering names, dates, genealogies, and the like: while others, not inferior in understanding, remember such things imperfectly, though they retain with suffi-

\* Aristotle, on Remembrance and Recollection, chap. 1. and 2.

cient exactness the general sense of what they read and hear. Some Memories are most tenacious of narrative, and others of moral reflections; some of verse, and others of prose; some of aphorisms, and some of reasonings. Among story-tellers too, there are many varieties: some being captivated chiefly by little tales of wit and humour; some by the publick business of the nation; and some by passages of history: some give you anecdotes of authors, and some of statesmen and kings; some expatiate on the rise and procedure of lawfuits, and some upon the transactions of private families. There are persons expert enough in the common affairs of life, who could never have made a figure in the literary world; there are students of profound erudition, who know little or nothing of the affairs of life: and some are equally distinguished as men of learning, and men of business. Memory is in some men tenacious from their infancy; and some there have been, who found much difficulty in learning to read, but afterwards made good progress in literature. There are, who soon commit a thing to memory, and soon forget it; and some acquire slowly, but remember long. Some readily recal their knowledge, whenever they have occasion for it; others with a retentive Memory have a tardy Recollection.—Of these varieties, some may no doubt be accounted for, as hinted already, from habits of attention, or of inattention, contracted in the beginning of life; from the prudence, or indiscretion, of our first teachers; and from the company and conversation, the amusements, and employments, that have been most familiar to us: but of others, one can hardly give any better account, than that they are constitutional.

But, whatever we determine concerning their efficient causes, it may, in regard to their final cause, be confidently affirmed, that they are of the greatest utility: as they give different turns to human genius, and so dispose men to different pursuits; and as they

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promote variety of conversation, and make men more amusing and more instructive to one another, than we could have been, if all had attended to, and remembered, the same things. Scholars, who associate with none but scholars, may improve in learning: but, if they would acquire a general knowledge of human affairs, they must frequent promiscuous company, in which are men of all capacities and callings. Hence let us learn to undervalue that narrow-mindedness, which inclines some people to avoid the society of those, who cannot talk to them in their own profession. A man of sense and virtue is in every condition respectable, and may contribute to the improvement of the greatest philosopher. He, who dislikes another for peculiarity of genius, sets an example, according to which he himself becomes the object of dislike; and betrays his insensibility to a most wise institution of Providence, from which human society derives many of its best comforts and ornaments. As well might he, on observing the varieties of animal nature, express dissatisfaction, that some creatures should have been endued with strength, and others with swiftness; some enabled to feed us with their milk, and others to cloath us with their wool; some fitted for domestick use, and others for the business of the field; and insist, that it would have been better, for us and for them, if they had all been of the same kind, and possessed the same faculties.

In the beginning of life, both sense and intellect are imperfect; and therefore Memory must be weak. Nay, it is probable, that in early infancy there is no lasting remembrance even of the most lively sensations. I know a blind gentleman, of very acute parts, who retains no idea of light or colour, though he did not lose his eyes till he was three years old: and yet, light is one of the first things that attract the notice of an infant, and seem to give him pleasure. And there are not many persons, who remember any

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thing that happened previous to their fourth or fifth year. An infant, however, soon comes to know the face of his nurse; though after weaning he soon forgets it: and, when he begins to speak plain, he acquires, with little attention, a vast multitude of words in a very short time. At the age of six years, he will learn the common words of a language in less than twelve months, if he hear it continually spoken; which, as he acquires the pronunciation, and accent, as well as the meaning, is a proof, not only of quick Memory, but also of an exact ear, and of great flexibility in the organs of articulation. Yet, while his Memory is so very susceptible, it is for the most part equally deficient in the retentive power, unless constantly exercised: for a child of six years, going abroad, loses his mother-tongue, as fast as he gets the foreign language.

As we advance in life, the acquisition of languages becomes more and more difficult; the talent of remembering new words decays gradually; nor is the ear so quick in catching a foreign accent, or the organs of speech so pliable in articulating unusual sounds. Hence we see the propriety of studying languages in our early years. And some think, that after forty we seldom make new attainments in this way: an opinion, which, though it may hold good in most cases, will however in many be found erroneous. The elder Cato is a memorable exception; who did not study Greek till he was very old, and yet made great progress in it. And Ogilvie, who translated Homer and Virgil, and, though no extraordinary poet, was a man of considerable learning, is said to have known little of either Greek or Latin, till he was past fifty. Study the languages, therefore, while ye are young; and ye will easily acquire them: but let not those *men*, whose youth has been without culture, ever despair of making a competent proficiency, while they are willing to bestow the necessary pains.



In youth, Memory is strong: for, then, our sensations are keen; the mind is not pre-occupied, nor distracted by business or care; curiosity raises expectation; novelty breeds wonder, surprise, and other lively passions; and almost every object gives either pleasure or pain, few or none being indifferent. In youth, however, Memory may be confounded by too great variety, or by want of method; may be deprived of its native vigour by habits of superficial observation; or may be perverted by fixing on trifles. To prevent these evils, it was already suggested, that the minds of young persons should be employed on those things only or chiefly, which are useful, which are level to their understanding, which they may be brought to relish, and which they are willing to study till they thoroughly comprehend. And special care should be taken, to render their studies agreeable, to raise in them a love of knowledge; and, by hints and questions occasionally thrown out, to make them wish for, and in some degree anticipate, the information that is to be laid before them. For, by all these means, attention is engaged, and the Memory prepared for receiving a deep, and a durable impression.

In mature age, there is less curiosity, and less enthusiasm; the mind is fatigued by a multiplicity of concerns, and begins to languish under the pressure of anxiety and the pain of disappointment. But then, the understanding is in its most perfect state, experience has taught the use and the method of strict attention, and Memory is improved by long exercise. In mature age, therefore, though Memory may be weaker, than in youth, in regard to the things that only affect the fancy, there is for the most part a more lasting remembrance of what we judge to be important.—The ancients divided human life into three periods; the *growing age*, *ætas crescens*, which continues till thirty; the *settled or middle age*, *ætas constans*, between thirty and fifty; and the *declining age*, *ætas declivis*,

*clivis*, from fifty till death: and supposed, that, till the end of the middle age, we are, or we may be, continually improving in knowledge; and that, beyond that period, we are daily losing somewhat of our former attainments. This may be true in general; but there are instances of men retaining all their faculties, and all their knowledge, even to the close of a long life.

In old age, however, sensation for the most part becomes languid; the affections decay, or are swallowed up in some one passion; the mind is less susceptible both of pain, and of pleasure; curiosity and ambition are extinguished, either by gratification, or by disappointment; present things give little surprise, and the future awaken no sanguine hope: but former perceptions remain in the mind, accompanied (as the remembrance of our early days never fails to be) with ideas of delight, mellowed, like colours in a picture, by length of time. Hence we see old men forgetful of recent transactions; which they affectedly, or perhaps seriously, undervalue, because they do not bring along with them those pleasing emotions wherewith their youthful adventures were attended. Hence they delight to recapitulate the affairs of former times; bestowing unbounded applause on the events and persons that were then the objects of their admiration. This is the character of Nestor in Homer: and this is part of that admired description of old age, which Aristotle and Horace have delineated, the one in his Rhetorick, and the other in his Art of Poetry.

That certain diseases are hurtful to Memory, was already observed. What physicians call a weakness of the nervous system often occasions a decay of this faculty. Dreaming, while it lasts, and every sort of delirium, whether continued or temporary, have a similar effect. Drunkenness impairs Memory; and, repeated often, terminates in early dotage. Even after a full meal, when preceded, as it always ought to be, by exercise, the intellectual

powers remain for an hour or two in a torpid state; and then, nothing is more pernicious than study, which, during this interval, prevents digestion, inflames the eyes, stupefies the head, and after all is attended with no success. This at least is a common case: but there are exceptions. Mr. Hume, as I have been assured by those who knew him, could immediately after dinner engage in profound speculation, without being the worse for it.—The morning has oft been celebrated as a friend to the Muses, and consequently, to Memory their mother; and, when their votary is in perfect health, perhaps it may be so: but many are incapable of mental application, till the day be pretty far advanced. Midnight, by its silence and coolness, is favourable to thought; but they who value health, which is more precious than learning, will never study after supper, if it can by any means be avoided. Night is the season of repose, both to man and beast, both to the mind and the body. Such is the law of nature; which he who violates will sooner or later repent the violation. Midnight studies occasion headaches, watchfulness, weak eyes, and broken sleep: they oblige one to lie in bed till late in the morning, which relaxes the human frame; and, by exposing the lungs, for so many hours, to an atmosphere loaded with the steam of candles, they are apt to bring on asthma, consumption, and other dreadful maladies. The morning after breakfast, and the evening before supper, are generally found to be the best seasons for exercising both Invention and Memory. But different rules may suit different constitutions.

## C H A P. III.

Methods of improving Memory.—Attention.—Recollection.—Writing.—Conversation, &c.—Directions for committing Discourses to Memory.—Whether Sermons should be recited from Memory, or read.

**H**AVING touched upon the more remarkable phenomena of Memory, I shall now propose some rules for its improvement. This head will not take up much room, as I have anticipated some things which I meant to reserve for it.

To a well-improved Memory belong these three talents or faculties; first, That of retaining easily, and with little trouble of attention or repetition; secondly, That of retaining for a long time; and thirdly, That of a ready recollection.—Or, to give it in the words of Roger Ascham, “A good Memory is well known by three properties: that is, if it be quicke in receyving, sure in keeping, and redie in delivering furthe again.”\*

For improving Memory in the first particular, I can propose nothing more effectual, than frequent exercise, and a habit of strict Attention. He, who is ambitious to acquire this talent, will set apart certain portions of his time, for the purpose of exercising his Memory, either by recollecting what was formerly imprinted on it, or by making new attainments. And, that this exercise may be the more amusing, as well as useful, he will be careful not to load his Memory with frivolous things, or inelegant compositions, or with what he does not perfectly understand. Nor is it

\* Ascham's Scholemaster.

my advice, that he should, on these occasions, confine himself to serious matters, though they no doubt claim his first regard: humorous writing, and jocular conversation, when friendly to virtue and good-manners, are a great relief to the mind; and I once knew a boy, who having been, by the indiscreet zeal of his mother, kept continually poring on sermons, and obliged to commit them to Memory, lost his other faculties, and became stupid. Historical narrative, and poetical description, are also very proper for exercising Remembrance, and at the same time for amusing the fancy. I have already recommended habits of Attention; and pointed out the method of recollecting from time to time what we are reading, or have been hearing.

What we have been doing, is also a matter, on which we cannot too often exercise our Memory. Seasons of self-examination, at which our past actions, thoughts, and purposes, pass in review before us, to be approved if we find them right, and condemned and rectified where they appear to have been wrong, are recommended by the divine and the philosopher, as indispensably requisite to moral improvement. They are not less so to intellectual proficiency. They serve to give us clear ideas of ourselves and of other men; to methodize our experience, and fix it in the mind; to enlarge and correct our knowledge of human affairs; and so to prepare us both for business, and for conversation. They are particularly necessary, when we are engaged in very active scenes; for then ideas pass through the mind so rapidly, that, without habitual Recollection, we must forget a great deal of what it is our interest to remember. Some men keep a record of the more remarkable occurrences of their life. They who fill stations of importance ought certainly to do so; after the example of Cesar, and Cicero, and most of the great men of antient times. And, though I will not affirm that this is equally the duty of others, I beg leave to say, that  
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of several persons in the middle and lower ranks of life, whom I have known to be punctual in this respect, I never heard one regret the time which he had employed on his journal.

Facility of Remembrance is further promoted by a regular order and distribution of things. A confused discourse makes no impression: and, of a number of unconnected sentences if we remember two or three, we generally forget all the rest. But a methodical composition, rightly divided into its several heads or members, which do all naturally illustrate each other, and whereof none can be misplaced or wanting without injury to the whole, is readily understood and quickly remembered; because, all the topics being connected, the idea of one suggests that of another. It resembles a machine, whose parts are put together and adjusted by the artist, and which by a person skilled in mechanicks is understood, and remembered, upon being once examined; while a confused discourse is like a parcel of wheels and pegs and fragments, lying together in a heap, which, after repeated examinations, we can make nothing of, and which leaves no distinct impression in the Memory.

To talk upon a subject, makes the mind attentive to it, and promotes facility of Remembrance. And, in this way, we may improve ourselves by instructing the ignorant, as well as by conversing with those who are superiour to us in wisdom, or equal. Every man, who can speak, thinks in some one language or other: but, if our words only pass internally through the mind, we shall not so well remember them, as if we had given them vocal utterance. Conversation, too, makes Recollection, and something of arrangement, necessary; and obliges the speaker to express himself so as to be understood by others; which is sometimes not easily done, even by those who think they very well understand their own meaning. By all these exercises, Attention is fixed, and our thoughts

thoughts are set in a variety of lights ; and, therefore, we become more thoroughly acquainted with them, and more exactly retain them. For, in silent meditation, the mind is apt to be indolent ; to quit a subject before it has obtained a clear view of it ; to escape from thoughts that seem to be attended with any perplexity ; and to follow every amusing idea that may present itself, without caring how far it may lead from the present purpose. Of such meditations the Memory retains little or nothing. But when we speak aloud, or converse, our thoughts become more stationary, and are better connected, and more perfectly understood ; and impressions are made on the ear, as well as on the mind.

Memory may be made both susceptible and tenacious, and the understanding greatly improved, by writing. I do not mean, by writing out common-places from books,—of which I have spoken in another place\* ; but by putting what we think upon paper, and expressing it in our own words. Our thoughts are fleeting, and the greater part of our words are forgotten as soon as uttered : but, by writing, we may give permanency to both ; and keep them in view, till, by comparing one with another, we make all consistent, and supply what is wanting, and amend what is erroneous. Thus attention is fixed ; judgment is exercised ; clear ideas are conveyed to the understanding ; and the Memory is prepared for receiving a deep impression. Let us, therefore, often write down, not only the sentiments we learn from books, and teachers, and conversation ; but also those that are peculiarly our own, of which a considerable number may arise in the minds of most men every day. And, though many of these might, no doubt, be forgotten without loss, yet some may be found worthy of a lasting remembrance.

\* See, *On the Usefulness of Classical Learning*, page 479, 480 : third edition.

And here let me caution my young reader against the practice of writing confusedly, inaccurately, or on loose papers. It is as easy, and far more advantageous, to write correctly, and legibly, with durable ink, and in note-books provided for the purpose, and carefully preserved. And, when a volume is finished, it will be an amusement, and a profitable one too, to read it over; to make an index to it; and to write upon the cover such a title, or summary of contents, as may serve for a direction, when afterwards you want to revise any particular passage.

And be not deterred, as some are, from writing down a remark, by the apprehension that you may afterwards find it erroneous. I am not advising you to publish your thoughts to the world, or even to all your acquaintance; but only to record them, for your own benefit, or for the inspection of an intimate friend, in whose judgment, good-nature, and fidelity, you can trust. And what, though many of them be erroneous? When you correct the error, be comforted with this consideration, that you are wiser now, than you were before. No man is ashamed of having been once an infant; that being a state of imperfection, which is common and necessary. Nor is it less necessary, or less common, to acquire knowledge gradually, and to grow in wisdom as we grow in years.

This practice of writing is much recommended by Cicero and Quintilian. The advantages of it are manifold. It not only makes us think, and remember, with accuracy; but also tends to form the style, and to give us a command of words, and a pure and easy elocution; which in every state of life is a most useful talent, and highly ornamental; and which, when accompanied with a sound judgment and good address, seldom fails to advance a man in the world. This practice also gives stability to our thoughts, and puts it in our power to review and rectify them, as we grow wiser, and to mark our progress in style and literature. In this way, too, we  
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learn to think for ourselves, and acquire in time a stock of knowledge that is properly of our own growth : which is a proof, that our minds are really cultivated, and serves as an encouragement to persist in making further acquisitions.—To a person grown old in the pursuits of learning, and in the study of human nature, such a record, as is here proposed, of the progress of the understanding in his early years, would be inexpressibly amusing, and very profitable. And, though one should not devote one's self to letters, nor live to be old, such a record would be of great use in the improvement of one's mind and Memory, and would amply compensate the labour of carrying it on.

Frequent recapitulations of what we learn, often to converse about it, (where that can be done conveniently), and as often as we can to reduce it to practice, are almost the only further means that can be proposed, for rendering Memory tenacious.

As to quickness of Recollection ; it depends chiefly on exercise, and on our being often in circumstances, in which it may be necessary for us to call to mind, and make use of, our learning. When these opportunities are wanting, let us however habitually revise, and meditate upon, such parts of knowledge as we wish to have always at command. Persons, who frequently join in general conversation, or whose profession obliges them to speak in publick, have for the most part a facility of Recollection, that surpriseth the recluse student ; who perhaps knows more than they ; but who, for want of practice, cannot to mind the thoughts he is in quest of till the opportunity of applying them be lost. This is a great misfortune. Remembrance, with tardy Recollection, is little better than forgetfulness. It is like those weapons, mentioned in the proverb, which are never at hand in the hour of danger ; or like those friends, who are always ready to help you, except when you have occasion for them. To those who labour under this infirmity,

it is, therefore, of great importance, to exercise themselves frequently in Recollection; to cultivate a social and communicative temper; to engage in the active scenes of life; and sometimes, when alone, to make speeches extempore, on any occasional subject. Thus they will acquire that self-command in speaking, and that presence of mind in company, without which one is rather encumbered, than assisted, by one's learning.

A methodical course of study, a love of order, and a habit of distributing our knowledge into classes, and referring every new acquisition to its proper head, will also be of use in promoting a ready Recollection. A merchant, who keeps regular books, can instantly turn to the record of any transaction, if he know the date, or the subject of it, or the name of the person concerned in it: but they, who put every thing in writing as it occurs, without any subsequent arrangement; or, in other words, who keep only a day-book, must be often at a loss, when they want to re-examine any article, and may employ an hour to no purpose in searching for that, which the other would have found in a moment. In Recollection, the case is nearly the same, with those who are accustomed to arrange their studies according to a plan, as contrasted with others, whose thoughts and whose affairs are all in confusion.—Traders often revise their books; to see whether every thing be neat, and accurate, and in its proper place. Students, in like manner, should often revise their knowledge, or at least the more useful branches of it; renew those impressions on the Memory, which had begun to decay through length of time; and be particularly careful to retain the plan, or general arrangement, of every part of erudition.

But, while I recommend method, I would warn you against the ostentation of it. This is called Formality; and has often given an awkward and finical air to persons of a very worthy character.

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In every work of art, which requires labour, and admits of elegance, the chief point of skill is, to conceal the art as much as possible. The rule is antient; and has been found indispensable, not only in poetry, oratory, and style, but also in manners, and in much of the business of common life.

Conversation was recommended, as a means of improving Memory, both in the retentive power, and in the talent of ready Recollection. But, for the benefit of some young persons, it may be necessary to subjoin a caution or two, in regard to this matter. For, at so great an expence as that of delicacy, we must not seek, either to acquire learning, or to improve Remembrance.

Now, in company, it is our duty, to adapt ourselves to the innocent humours and ways of thinking of those with whom we converse; and it is indelicate to obtrude our concerns upon them, or give scope to any of those peculiarities of behaviour, that distinguish our own profession, or the small societies to which we are accustomed. The violation of this rule is called Pedantry. It is offensive to persons of polite manners, and conveys a mean idea of the man in whom it has become habitual. And for this there is good reason. The Conversation of such a man shows, that he does not deserve the attention of others, because he is always thinking of himself; that he has not enlargement of mind for conceiving the circumstances and sentiments of his company, nor tenderness and generosity of nature to take part in them, or sympathise with them; and that his customary associates, among whom he has contracted or confirmed these evil habits, must be equally narrow-minded with himself.—Therefore, unless called upon to do so, by the company, or by those who have a right to preside in it, the soldier ought not to expatiate on military affairs, nor the traveller on his adventures, nor the hunter on hounds and foxes, nor the farmer on his improvements, nor the scholar on his authors,

thors. Soldiers with soldiers, farmers with farmers, and learned men with learned men, may talk in their respective trades ; because in this way they may please and instruct one another : but, where people are of different pursuits and characters, the Conversation ought to be general, and such as all present, especially those to whom particular respect is due, may be supposed to understand, and to relish. And, how much soever we may be impressed with what we have been reading or meditating, and however desirous we may be to digest and remember it, we are not entitled to make it an object of general attention, unless we have reason to believe it will be generally agreeable.

At this rate, you will perhaps imagine, that General Conversation cannot be very edifying. And true it is, that people do not join in it, with a view to instruct, or to be instructed, in the arts and sciences. These are to be acquired by study and contemplation, by frequenting schools of learning, or by attending those private societies or clubs, which men sometimes form for the sake of mutual improvement. But people resort to general company, to relieve themselves for a while from the anxieties of life, to refresh the mind after the fatigues of study or of labour, and to improve and please one another by a mutual interchange of kind words, and benevolent attentions.

Nor think, because idle words are prohibited in Scripture, that therefore every thing we say in company ought to tend to the illustration of truth. Idle words ought surely to be prohibited, and avoided. And all those words may be so called, which produce either no effect, or a bad one ; or which proceed from motives that are either not good, or positively evil. But that Conversation, which promotes the innocent amusement of our friends, and so contributes to their health and happiness ; or which, by expressing our benevolence towards them, cherishes that temper in us, and

gives an example for the encouragement of it in others;—Conversation, I say, of this character is not idle, because it is favourable to virtue, and friendly to mankind.

Nor is Conversation, even in general company, uninstruative. From it we may derive much material information, in regard to the characters and passions of men, the customs of the world, the transactions of past and of present times, and many other particulars of no less moment. Illiterate men, by frequenting polite circles, often acquire such a fund of intelligence, as makes them equally instructive and entertaining. Books are certainly very useful. But the time was, when they were not common. Yet, at that time, men had sense, and knowledge too; and there were great statesmen, great poets, and great philosophers; and greater commanders, and orators, than have appeared in the world ever since. Whence, then, did they derive their greatness? From genius, from experience, from thought; partly no doubt from books; and also, from that grand vehicle of necessary knowledge, Conversation.

Sermons are almost the only sort of continued discourses, which it is in this country the custom to get by heart. To such readers, as may at any time think fit to comply with this custom, the following directions will be useful. They are intended for the benefit of those, whose Memory, is neither very bad nor very good. Extraordinary Memories have no need of them.

1. As a general preparative both to the remembrance, and to the composition of Sermons, let it be your care to acquire a competence of theological learning, and to be intimately acquainted with the sentiments and phraseology of Scripture. For that is well remembered, which is well understood: and passages of Holy Writ form a considerable, and, when judiciously selected, the most valuable, part, of the preacher's discourse. If, therefore, you are well instructed in theology, the argument of every Sermon will be familiar

familiar to you ; on every such argument your mind will be stored with a great variety of expression ; you can never be at a loss for topicks ; and your quotations will be no burden to your Memory.

2. The discourse we are to get by heart we must ourselves compose ; otherwise, the labour of committing it to Memory will be such as to most minds would be insurmountable. And it must be accurately composed, and have in it nothing obscure or superfluous. For whatever puzzles the understanding is an incumbrance to Memory ; and what Horace observes of words is equally true of thoughts,

Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat ;

“ every superfluity is lost, like water poured into a vessel already full.”

Besides, let it be observed, that a Sermon is designed for the good of those who hear it ; and ought therefore to be attended to, and remembered by them. But, if you mix it up with words, phrases, or doctrines, which they do not understand, they will not attend, and they cannot remember ; so that, instead of good, it will do harm, by inuring them to habits of inattention in regard to religious truth. It must also be a regular discourse, tending to the illustration of some one important topick ; and properly divided into distinct heads, whereof each is connected with, and serves to explain, the rest, and none can be misplaced or omitted, without injury to the whole. For regularity and unity of design make men attentive, and, as formerly remarked, produce clearness of perception and distinct remembrance. But let the heads of the discourse be few, and affect not too great subtlety of division and subdivision : for this would distract the Attention, and overpower the Memory of the audience ; and never can be requisite in a practical dissertation, that is addressed to the people, and, as many wise men think, ought not to be very long.

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3. Let the discourse be written out, not in haste, but deliberately, with your own hand, in bright-coloured ink, and in characters that are distinct and legible, and moderately and uniformly large; without contractions, without long strokes or flourishes of the pen, and as much as may be without blots or interlineations; with reasonable and equal spaces between the lines; and accurately pointed, and divided into paragraphs, as the subject requires. To some, who have not studied the laws of Memory, this may seem a frivolous rule: But I have formerly accounted for it; and am confident, that whoever makes the trial will soon have experience of its propriety.

4. Let the subject of the discourse be interesting to us, and the doctrine such, as we seriously believe, and are anxious that others should believe and remember. This may look more like a precept of common honesty, than a rule for the assistance of Memory. And a precept of common honesty it is, no doubt; for that man must be a most audacious hypocrite, who can solemnly deliver, as conformable to the Divine Will, and recommend to the belief of others, what he himself disbelieves. But neither is this rule foreign from the present purpose. For it was mentioned, as a law of Memory, that what is agreeable to our own inclinations, and way of thinking, has a chance to be better remembered, than what we consider as a matter of indifference.

5. The task of committing to Memory should be entered upon, when the mind is disengaged from business, and the body in health. If the mind is not vacant, Attention will be painful, and interrupted, and the Memory slow to receive any durable impression. And if the health be disordered, intellectual exertion, without conveying any improvement to the mind, will only do harm to the body. There are certain hours of the day, during which one is better qualified, than at any other time, for invention, remem-

brance, and other mental exercises. But the same hours will not suit all constitutions, as already was observed; and therefore no general rule can be given in regard to the time that may be most successfully employed in the work we now speak of. I think it is Lord Verulam who says, that, in exerting any faculty with a view to form a habit, two seasons are chiefly to be laid hold on; the one, when we are best disposed to act; the other, when we are worst disposed: that, by improving the former, we act easily, and make great progress; and that, by a frequent use of the latter, we overcome reluctance, and at last acquire a habit of doing the action with ease, whenever it is necessary. This may be an excellent method of cherishing moral habits; as virtue is at all times friendly to happiness, and never can be unseasonable. But, in bodily or intellectual exercises, I apprehend that this rule is not quite so proper; at least for persons of a delicate constitution. In attempting, for example, to acquire a habit of running, or even of walking, when the stomach is full, a valetudinarian might soon destroy himself; and in the same circumstances it may be equally detrimental to engage in any fatiguing study. To force the mind to exert itself in remembrance, invention, or profound inquiry, at a time when both mind and body are inclinable to rest, is likely to be attended with bad consequences; and therefore, unless when necessary, ought not to be attempted. After dinner, a studious man may converse, or saunter in the fields, or read an amusing book, or entertain himself (as Milton is said to have done) with music; but he will do well to refrain from every laborious exercise, both mental and corporeal, till digestion be pretty far advanced, and his spirits begin to regain their wonted alacrity.

6. While we are committing any thing to Memory, it may be profitable to speak slowly, and with propriety, and to speak aloud. For thus, Attention will be fixed; an appeal made to



two senses at the same time, and no habits contracted of faulty pronunciation.

7. It has been doubted, whether the Memory should be charged with each particular word of what we get by heart; or whether it may not be sufficient, if we remember the whole meaning, and the greater part of the expression. The former may perhaps be thought unnecessary; and yet I believe it is the best method, for those who would acquire the talent of exact remembrance. Yet I do not propose this as a rule without exception: for there is reason to fear, that some Memories are by no means equal to such a task. But, on the other hand, let us bear this in mind, that the more we indulge Memory, or any other faculty, in habits of indolence, the more difficult it will be for us to improve it to that pitch of vigour, whereof nature may have made it capable.

8. Let us never, by study of any kind, overload Memory, or overstrain our faculties; for this would bring discouragement, incapacity, and bad health. We ought to begin with easy tasks, and advance by degrees to such as are more difficult. A clergyman, a particular friend of mine, has often told me, that, when he commenced preacher, it was the labour of many days to get his sermon by heart; but that, by long practice, he has now improved his Memory to such a pitch, that he can, by two hours application, fix one in his mind so effectually, as to be able to recite it in publick, without the change, omission, or transposition, of the smallest word. To me this fact seems extraordinary; for I am certain of its truth: but I learn from it, that, by patience and long practice, much may be done for the improvement of our nature, and that none of our faculties are more improveable than Memory. What toil and perseverance, in cultivating the bodily powers, must it require, to qualify the tumbler for those feats of activity, with which he astonishes mankind! When we first see them, we can hardly

believe our eyes : he seems to perform what till now we thought impossible. Were we to take equal pains in the improvement of our intellectual and moral nature, which are surely not less susceptible of cultivation, who can tell to what heights of excellence, and of happiness, we might at length arise !

9. The discourse which we would get by heart we must understand, not only in general (for that we cannot fail to do, if we compose it) but in every sentence, and in every word. And if there be in it any word, or sentence, which is not sufficiently clear, let us either make it clear, or expunge it. There are certain quotations from Scripture, and other theological phrases, which in composing sermons almost every preacher makes use of, though every one is not at pains to ascertain their signification : and it often happens, especially in our first attempts at writing, that we think ourselves perfectly skilled both in expressions, and in doctrines, which yet we understand very little. It is therefore incumbent on us, for the benefit of our readers and hearers, as well as ourselves, and in order to improve our understanding, as well as to facilitate remembrance, that we examine our own meaning with the most critical exactness. If a discourse, or any part of it, be such as we should find it impossible to give a summary of ; if any sentence appear to be inserted, rather for the purpose of lengthening the paragraph, than of illustrating the thought, or rather to improve the sound, than to clear up the subject ; if any word or passage can be spared, without taking away from the emphasis, or the connection :—these are all symptoms of inaccuracy ; and ought to put us upon re-considering what we have written, and making the necessary amendments, before we begin to commit it to Memory. For we may be assured, that this exercise will be more or less difficult, according as the discourse is less or more free from inaccuracy, obscurity, and redundancy.

Lastly,

Lastly, while engaged in this work, let us encourage agreeable passions, as hope of success and improvement, and a sense of the value of a cultivated Memory, and of the importance of that which it is our ambition to remember. Light spirits are favourable to every sort of exertion; but a desponding mind is generally unsuccessful.

And here, it may not, perhaps, be improper to make a few remarks on the expediency of pronouncing Sermons from Memory: and I make them the more willingly, because what I have to say on this head may be comfortable to those young men, whose Memory, like my own, inclines rather to weakness, than to strength.

First, then, it can admit of no doubt, that every publick speaker and teacher ought to be able to speak from Memory, or even without premeditation, as the circumstances may require; and should, therefore, now and then practise extemporary speaking, and study to acquire a readiness of apprehension and a command of words, and take every prudent method he can think of, for improving Remembrance.

Secondly, They whose faculties are uncommonly susceptible; who can retain a Sermon after once or twice reading it; or who, like the gentleman above-mentioned, can commit one to Memory in two or three hours, may, at all times, or as often as they choose, preach without notes; especially, if they have confidence in their Recollection, and can divest themselves of anxiety. But many men there are, of good parts, who, from natural bashfulness, or from bodily weakness, or from having been in danger of exposing themselves through a sudden failure of Memory, cannot depend on their presence of mind, or quickness of Recollection, when they appear in publick; though in the ordinary affairs of life they have no reason to complain of this faculty. Such persons ought not to preach without papers. If they do, it will be injurious both to themselves, and to their hearers. To themselves; by  
tormenting

tormenting them with solicitude, to the great prejudice of their health. And to their hearers: because the fear of forgetting will take off their attention from the management of their voice; the consequence whereof is, that they will speak without that energy which impresses the meaning on the audience; and may, moreover, contract bad habits of drawling, canting, hesitating, or quick speaking; which are all disagreeable to rational hearers, and make every hearer inattentive; and the most eloquent Sermon insipid.

Thirdly, Those preachers who, after much practice, cannot commit a discourse to Memory in less than two days, (and this, I believe, is a common case) should never in my opinion attempt it; except, perhaps, on extraordinary occasions, when they may be obliged to speak with ease and elegance, and yet have no opportunity of reading. Two days every week are almost a third part of human life. And when one considers, that the sermons thus committed to Memory are forgotten as soon as delivered, which is also a common case, who would not regret such a waste of time? At this rate, of thirty years employed in the ministry, there are almost ten consumed,—in what? in drudgery more laborious, and far more unprofitable, than that of a schoolboy;—in loading the Memory with words, which are not remembered for three days together. Would not the preacher have laid out those years to better purpose, in giving correctness to his publick discourses, or in other improving studies; or in visiting and instructing the neighbours; or in agriculture, and the like liberal amusements?—Besides, in these circumstances, a clergyman can never preach without long preparation; nor, if at any time his health should fail, without a degree of anxiety that may be detrimental to both his mind and his body.

Indeed, were Sermons that are pronounced from Memory found to have a more powerful effect upon the hearer, than such as are read, I should not think this time altogether lost. But, if the  
preacher

preacher have learned to read well, (which he may, and ought to do), and if he write what he has to say with that distinctness which is here recommended, and prepare himself for the publick exhibition by several private rehearsals at home, I am inclined to think, that he will pronounce with more composure and self-command, and with an energy more becoming the pulpit, than if he were to speak from Recollection. For, in the one case, his mind is at ease, and he has nothing to do, but to pronounce: in the other, he pronounces and recollects at the same time; and is, besides, liable to mistakes and failures of Memory, and, if his nerves are not uncommonly strong, to occasional fits of solicitude.—Why does a musician choose to play by book even the musick that he remembers? It is, because, by taking in, with one glance of his eye, a number of contiguous notes, his mind is always disengaged, and he is every where the better prepared for introducing the expressive touches, and other necessary ornaments. In like manner, a good reader will, if I mistake not, read more emphatically and with greater elegance, what he sees before him, and is well acquainted with, than he can pronounce what is suggested by continual Recollection; especially, if the discourse he has to deliver be of considerable length.

As to the effect upon the hearers:—if I am to judge by my own feelings, and trust to the declaration of many persons of candour and sensibility, I must say, that Sermons in the mouth of a good reader have a more powerful energy, than those that are spoken without book. The pathos may be less vehement, perhaps, but it is more solemn, and seems better adapted to the place, and to the subject. Preachers, indeed, there are, who lay claim to extraordinary gifts, and pretend to speak from supernatural impulse: and there are hearers, who give them credit for this; and think, that what is written, and read to them, has too much the air of mere

human doctrine. But such a conceit is of no account in rational inquiry; for it only proves, that the preacher is vain, and the people ignorant.

But the orators of Greece and Rome spoke from Memory; and stage-players do the same; and senators, in debate, and lawyers, in their pleadings, would make a despicable figure, if they were to read what they have to say. This plea has been urged by men of sense, and deserves to be considered.

1. The orators of Greece and Rome, in the forum, in the senate, and before the judges, spoke, with a view to determine their hearers to some immediate resolution; and, if they gained this end, were not solicitous, whether it was by means of fair reasoning, or of sophistry; by swaying the judgment, or inflaming the passions; by giving useful information, that might be followed with lasting advantage, or by throwing out what had only plausibility enough to produce momentary consequences. It was, therefore, necessary, that, by the promptness of their eloquence, they should impress the hearers with a high opinion of their wisdom; should deliver their harangues with that vehemence, and those varieties of gesture, which command attention and applause; and should have their eye continually upon their audience, to observe the effects of what was said, that they might know how to change their topics and manner of address, according to the circumstances.

How different are the views; and, therefore, how different ought the eloquence to be, of the Christian Divine! He speaks the truth, and that only; in order to instruct his people in matters, which they and he know to be of everlasting concern, and to establish in them not momentary, but permanent principles, of piety and benevolence. His doctrines are all supposed to be collected with caution from the unerring word of God. He is required, not only to speak with modesty and soberness, but also to

be sober and modest; not to overpower with vehemence, far less to dazzle with sophistry, but to prevail by motives urged in meekness, and to persuade by arguments founded in right reason. His aim is, to direct their attention, not to himself, but to God and their duty; not to court applause as an orator, but to do good to the souls of men, and set them an example of that humility, contrition, and pious hope, which become a man, a sinner, and a christian. In a word, if he have a right sense of the importance of his function, and of what it is incumbent on him to say, and to do, a peculiar seriousness, simplicity, and unassuming dignity, will purify his style, modulate his voice, and characterise his whole deportment. To read his discourse may, therefore, be graceful in him; though in the Greek or Roman orator, it must have been absurd, and even impossible.

I hope it will not be thought presumptuous in a layman, to have said so much on the elocution of the pulpit. It is a matter in which I am interested, as well as others: and I have not affirmed any thing concerning it, but what I know to be warranted by reason and Scripture. Let me confess, however, that the sketch here offered is not the effect of investigation merely: it is a copy taken from the life. And they who have had the happiness to observe, and to feel, that sublime and apostolick simplicity, and that mild, though commanding energy, which distinguish both the composition, and the pronunciation, of a Hurd and a Porteus\*, will be at no loss to discover the originals.

2. The business of the player is, not to instruct the audience, or even to speak what he thinks; but to perform a part which is avowedly fictitious, and to please by imitating nature. He must assume a variety of passions, joy, sorrow, love, hatred, contempt, admiration, anger, jealousy, despair; and speak and act accord-

\* Now Bishops of Worcester and Chester.

ingly. It is his interest, to be admired, for his voice, motion, shape, eyes, and features, for his power of suppressing the emotions he feels, and of counterfeiting those he does not feel. Nay, I am sorry to say, but it is true, that, upon the modern stage, one player must sometimes put on airs of debauchery, irreligion, and impudence, which his soul abhors; and another must utter sentiments of innocence and honour, which in him all the world knows to be gross hypocrisy. Indeed, no two professions on earth differ more widely, than those of a christian minister and a player: and as the composure and humility of the pulpit would be intolerable on the stage, theatrical vociferation and gesture must be equally so in the pulpit. In regard, therefore, to modes of pronounciation and publick behaviour, nothing can be more absurd, than to propose the one as a pattern to the other.

Besides, let it be remembered, that the player's Memory is not burdened with a long continued oration; and is, moreover, assisted from time to time by a prompter; who is always ready to suggest what he is to say or do, if he himself should be at a loss: that the part which others bear in the dialogue serves to remind him of his own: and that, during the performance, there are intervals of rest, in which he may have recourse to his papers, and refresh his Memory. To say, therefore, that a preacher must speak without book, because a player does so, is surely unreasonable; unless you are willing to allow prompters, and pauses, and intervals of recollection, to the former, as well as to the latter; which, as the one cannot dispense with, the other will never demand.

3: The case of senators in debate, and of lawyers in their pleadings, is equally foreign from the present purpose. It is their ambition, not only to vindicate their own sentiments or party, but also to confute whatever may be urged on the other side. To commit a discourse to Memory, is not the preparation that will fit them for such a task; because it must often be impossible for them to foresee

with



with certainty, what topicks it may be requisite to insist upon. It is by a perfect knowledge of the subject in question, and of the laws of his country, and by talents for extemporary speaking, derived from nature and improved by habit, that the lawyer, and the senator, is enabled to acquit himself with honour in his publick appearances. And, of multitudes whose interest it would be to excel in this way, how few are ever able to rise to distinction! In our two houses of Parliament, there are about seven hundred and eighty members; who, from their rank and education, must be considered as men of the highest accomplishments; and yet the good speakers in this assembly, the most august in the world, are not very numerous: a proof, that the mode of speaking, which there commands attention, is a talent not often met with, even among the most enlightened of mankind. Now clergymen must appear in publick every Sunday, prepared to instruct the people in their duty, and to advance nothing but what they are supposed to have seriously examined beforehand, and found to be agreeable to reason and revelation. They have no opposition to combat by extemporary arguments; and they are, and ought to be, accountable to the church, if they assert any thing repugnant to sound doctrine. But senators and lawyers are allowed the greatest freedom of speech; and, if they keep within the bounds of decency, are not responsible for what they may urge in behalf of their cause, or party.

In Italy and France, sermons are generally pronounced without notes. But they are at the same time accompanied with much theatrical gesture; and the consequence is, that the people consider them rather as an amusement, than as a part of the church-service. In England, the established clergy do for the most part read their sermons: and England has produced a greater number of good preachers, than any other country in Europe.

## C H A P. IV.

## Remarks on the Memory of Brutes.—Inferences.

I SHALL now make a few remarks on the Memory of Brutes. That many of them have this faculty, is undeniable. We find, that whelps, as well as children, once burned, avoid the fire; and that horses, oxen, and dogs, and many other animals, not only have their knowledge of nature enlarged by experience, but also derive from man various arts and habits, whereby they become useful to him, in war, hunting, agriculture, and other employments. Most of these creatures know their fellows, and keepers: nay dogs and horses learn to do certain things, on hearing certain words articulated. Beagles obey the voice of the hunter, and pursue, or desist from pursuit, as he commands; and the war-horse is acquainted, not only with the voice of his rider, but also with the summons of the drum and trumpet; as hunting-courfers are, with the opening of the hounds, and the sound of the horn. Goats, sheep, and oxen, and even poultry, of their own accord, repair in the evening to their homes: parrots acquire the habit of uttering words; and singing birds, of modulating tunes: and bees, after an excursion of several miles (as naturalists affirm) return, each to her hive; nor does it appear that they mistake another for their own, even where many are standing contiguous. Lions spare him who attends them, when they would tear in pieces every thing else: doves fly to the window where they have been fed; and the elephant is said to possess a degree of remembrance not many removes from rationality. I might mention too the dog of Ulysses, who knew his master after twenty years absence\* ; for the story is

\* Hom. Odyss. xvii. 300.

probable,

probable, though it may not be true: as well as what is recorded in Aulus Gellius, of Androclus and his lion †, who, having received mutual civilities from each other in the deserts of Africa, renewed their acquaintance when they met in the circus at Rome, and were inseparable companions ever after. That the inhabitants of the water have Memory, we cannot doubt, if we believe, what Pliny, in his Natural History, Bernier, in his account of Indostan, and Martial, in some of his epigrams ‡, have mentioned, of fishes kept in ponds, that had learned to appear in order to be fed, when called by their respective names. Whether shellfishes, and snails, and worms, and other torpid animals, have at any time given signs of Memory, I am not able to determine.

In some particulars requisite to the preservation of brutes, instinct seems to supersede the necessity of Remembrance. Young bees, on the first trial, extract honey from flowers, and fashion their combs, as skilfully as the oldest; and the same thing may be remarked of birds building their nests; and of brute animals, in general, adopting, when full grown, the voice and the manner of life, which nature has appropriated to the species. Some late authors pretend, that birds learn to sing from their parents; and that a lark, for example, which had never heard the lark's song; would never sing it. But this I cannot admit, because my experience leads to a different conclusion; though I allow, that many animals have the power of imitating, by their voice, those of another species. If this theory be just; then a bird gets its note, as a man does his mother-tongue, by hearing it; and, therefore, the songs of individual birds will be as various nearly, as the languages of individual men; so that the larks of France would have one sort of note, those of Italy another, and those of England a third.

† A. Gellius, v. 14.

‡ Plin, Hist. x. 89. Martial, iv. 30. x. 30.

I would as soon believe, that a dog, which had never heard any other voice, than that of a man, or of a swine, would not bark, but speak, or grunt.—Man is taught by experience, what is fit to be eaten, or to be drank. But brutes seem to know this by instinct. The mariner, who lands in a desert island, is cautious of tasting such unknown fruits, as are not marked by the pecking of birds. Dogs, and other animals, may be poisoned by the superiour craft of men; but leave them to themselves, and they are seldom in danger of taking what is hurtful, though they sometimes suffer from swallowing too much of what is good. And some of these creatures, when their health is disordered, are directed by instinct to the proper medicine.

Without Memory, brutes would be incapable of discipline; and so, their strength, sagacity, and swiftness, would be in a great measure unserviceable to man. Nor would their natural instincts guard them sufficiently against the dangers they are exposed to, from one another, and from things inanimate. Memory is also to them, as to us, a source of pleasure. For to this in part must be owing the satisfaction that many of them take, in the company of their fellows, in the friendship of man, and in the care of their offspring; of which last, however, their love and remembrance last no longer, than is necessary to the preservation of the young.—But such joys, as we derive, from the idea of danger escaped, of opposition vanquished, or of pleasure formerly possessed, seem peculiar to rational nature, and not within the sphere of the inferiour creation: for to produce them, not only Memory, but also consciousness and recollection are necessary. Brutes are engrossed, chiefly or only, with what is present: their Memory being rather a necessary and instantaneous suggestion, than a continued or voluntary act. For the sorrow, that a dog feels for the loss of his master, a cow for that of her calf, and a horse for that of his companion,

companion, is nothing more perhaps, though it may continue for some time, than an uneasiness arising from the sense of a present want. We can hardly suppose, that any thing then passes in the animal, similar to what we experience, when we revolve the idea of a departed friend. In a word, I do not find sufficient ground to believe, that they are capable of Recollection, or active Remembrance; for this implies the faculty of attending to, and arranging, the thoughts of one's own mind; a power, which, as was formerly remarked, the brutes have either not at all, or very imperfectly.

Yet, let me not be quite positive in this affirmation. Some of the more sagacious animals, as horses, dogs, foxes, and elephants, have occasionally displayed a power of contrivance, which *would seem* to require reflection, and a more perfect use of Memory, than I have hitherto allowed that they possess. When a rider has fallen from his horse in a deep river, there have been instances of that noble creature taking hold with his teeth, and dragging him alive to land by the skirts of the coat. And let me here, for the honour of another noble creature, mention a fact, which was never before recorded, and which happened not many years ago within a few miles of Aberdeen.—As a gentleman was walking across the Dee, when it was frozen, the ice gave way in the middle of the river, and down he sunk; but kept himself from being carried away in the current, by grasping his gun, which had fallen athwart the opening. A dog, who attended him, after many fruitless attempts to rescue his master, ran to a neighbouring village, and took hold of the coat of the first person he met. The man was alarmed, and would have disengaged himself: but the dog regarded him with a look so kind and so significant, and endeavoured to pull him along with so gentle a violence, that he began to think there might be something extraordinary in the case, and suffered himself to be conducted by the animal; who brought him

him to his master, in time to save his life\*.—Was there not here, both Memory and Recollection, guided by experience, and by what in a human creature we should not scruple to call good sense? No: rather let us say, that here was an interposition of heaven; who, having thought fit to employ the animal as an instrument of this deliverance, was pleased to qualify him for it by a supernatural impulse. Here, certainly, was an event so uncommon, that from the known qualities of a dog no person would have expected it: and I know not, whether this animal ever gave proof of extraordinary sagacity in any other instance.

It is said by Aristotle, and generally believed, that brute animals dream. Lucretius describes those imperfect attempts at barking and running, which dogs are observed to make in their sleep; and supposes, agreeably to the common opinion, that they are the effects of dreaming; and that the animal then imagines himself to be pursuing his prey, or attacking an enemy. But, whether this be really the case; or whether those appearances may not be owing to some mechanical twitches of the nerves or muscles, rendered by long exercise habitual, is a point on which nothing can be affirmed with certainty.—Infants a month old smile in their sleep: and I have heard good women remark, that the innocent babe is then favoured with some glorious vision. But that a babe should have visions or dreams, before it has ideas, can hardly be imagined. This is probably the effect, not of thought, but of some bodily feeling, or merely of some transient contraction or expansion of the muscles. Certain it is, that no smiles are more

\* The person thus preserved, whose name was Irvine, died about the year 1778. His story has been much talked of in the neighbourhood. I give it, as it was told by himself to a relation of his, a gentleman of honour and learning, and my particular friend; from whom I had it, and who read and approved of this account, before it went to press.

captivating. And Providence no doubt intended them as a sort of silent language to engage our love; even as, by its cries, the infant is enabled to awaken our pity, and command our protection.

Memory is in some brutes accompanied with unaccountable circumstances. When a horse, an ox, or a goat, returns home of his own accord from the pasture, it is not wonderful; being an effect of Memory similar in all respects to what we experience in ourselves. But when a bee, whose eyes from their extreme convexity cannot see a foot before them, returns to her hive from a wide excursion; or when a dog, that has been carried in a basket thirty miles through a country which he never saw, finds his way a week after to his former dwelling, (of which I have known an instance)—what can we say, but that the smell of these animals, or some other faculty unknown to us, recalls to their Memory past perceptions, in a way that we cannot conceive! Indeed, where there are perceptive powers different from, or more exquisite than, any we enjoy, it is reasonable to think, that there must be modes of remembrance equally surpassing our comprehension. And in bees, and dogs, and some other animals, there seem to be faculties, of the nature of smell, as far beyond ours in accuracy, as the informations conveyed by the finest microscope are superiour to those we receive by the naked eye.

Yet, with all the helps he derives from instinct, or from more acute organs of sense, how inferiour is the Memory of the most intelligent brute to that of reasonable beings! The disproportion is almost infinite. Many of the irrational tribes are unsusceptible of discipline:—how narrow must the sphere be of their remembrance! Even the most docile soon reach the summit of improvement; and the arts, or rather the habits, attainable by them, and within the power of human industry to impress upon them, are very few. Wholly destitute of science, and of the powers of contemplation,

they are also deficient in the recollective faculty; without which we know how little our Memory would avail us: and all seem unable to follow even the shortest train of thought, or attend to any thing that does not affect the senses.

But of a human Memory, improved to no extraordinary pitch, how vast is the comprehension! With what an endless multitude of thoughts is it supplied, by reflection, reading, and conversation, inlets of ideas denied to the inferiour animals; and by an experience incomparably more diversified than theirs, and withal so modelled by our powers of arrangement and invention (which are also peculiar to man) as to be far more useful in itself, and much more distinctly remembered! Things natural; as animals, vegetables, minerals, fossils, mountains and vallies; land and water; earth and heaven; the sun, moon, and stars, with their several appearances, motions, and periods; the atmosphere and meteors, with all the vicissitudes of weather:—things artificial; as towns, streets, houses, highways, and machines, with their various appendages:—abstract notions in regard to truth and falsehood, beauty and deformity, virtue and vice, proportions in quantity and number, religion, commerce, and policy, whereof the brutes know nothing, and which are the chief materials of human conversation:—these are some of the general heads, under which may be arranged the manifold treasures of human Memory. And under each of these heads, what an infinity of individual things are comprehended!—Let a person, who has been as much in the world, as men of enterprise commonly are, revolve in his mind, how many human creatures he has been, and is, acquainted with; how much he remembers of their features, shape, voice, size, character, and sentiments, of their relations, connections, and history: let him then think of those men and women, whom he never saw, but has heard and read of; and of the characters he may have seen exemplified



in plays, poems, and other fabulous writings: and will he not be amazed, that his Memory should retain so many particulars relating to human creatures only; who yet, in the general distribution of human knowledge, do not perhaps form the most copious class of things? How numerous are the words even of one language! He, who is master of four, must be supposed to retain two hundred thousand words at least, with all the different ways of applying them according to rule, and innumerable passages in books to illustrate their meaning. And that four languages do not exceed the capacity of an ordinary man, will not be denied by those, who believe, with Pliny and Quintilian, that Mithridates understood two and twenty.

But who can reckon up, or even give a general arrangement of, all the objects, notions, and ideas, that one human mind may remember! And, is it not remarkable, and truly wonderful, that, the more an improved Memory retains, the greater is its capacity? Was it ever said, by any person of a sound mind; My Memory has received all it can receive, and I never from this hour desire to hear any new thing?—Let us hence learn to set a proper value on the dignity of the human soul; and to think of its intellectual faculties as inexpressibly superiour, both in kind and in degree, to those of the animal world. If we be capable of endless improvement, (and what reason is there to believe that we are not?) surely our destination must be different from theirs; for the Author of nature does nothing in vain: and an understanding, far more limited than that of man, would be sufficient for all the purposes of a creature, whose duration is circumscribed by the term of an hundred years. Our minds, therefore, must have been destined for scenes of improvement more extensive and glorious, than these below; and our being to comprehend periods more durable, than those which are measured out by the sun. This speculation forms

a proof, by which the wiser heathens were led to believe in the immortality of the soul. Thus reasoned Tully, in the person of the elder Cato: "Why should I enlarge?" says he, "since the activity of the mind is so great; since it remembers so much of what is past, anticipates so wisely what is to come, and is capable of so many arts, sciences, and inventions; of this I am persuaded, and thus I believe, that the being possessed of such endowments cannot be mortal." \*

These reflections lead me to animadvert a little on two strange conceits of the modern philosophy. The first is, that human faculties are so like those of other animals, that, if the form of their bodies were but a little more similar, we might characterise men, by calling them sagacious brutes; and brutes, by saying, that they are imperfect men. For the writers I allude to will hardly admit, that there is one original faculty in the former, which is not in some degree in the latter; insinuating, that the difference, where there is any, is owing rather to habits and experiences obtained by means of a more or less exquisite formation of bodily organs, than to any thing essential in the frame of the mind. Nay, some have gone so far as to say, or at least to make us suppose it is their belief, that man's primitive state was a state of brutality; that in it he enjoyed more health and happiness than he does now; that he becomes the more imperfect, the more he deviates from the brutal character; and that, if he did, as he ought to do, and as nature intended he should, he would go naked, and on all four.—As long as men believe history, and their senses, it will not be necessary to combat the latter part of this doctrine. Of the former I shall only say, Let those acquiesce in it who can. He, who is ambitious to claim consanguinity with the beasts, will not be much inclined to

\* Cicero de Senectute, cap. 21.

read any thing I write ; and therefore I may leave him to himself.— Brutes, no doubt, as well as men, have the power of retaining past perceptions : but, after what has been said, I presume it will appear, that they who compare this power, as it is in man, with what is called Memory in a brute; and discern no essential difference, may as well find out, that gnats and whales are the same sort of animal, and that the hissing of a goose is an exact imitation of the thunder of a sea-engagement.

That there is in the universe a scale rising, by gradual ascent, from nothing up to Deity, is another modern conceit, not less absurd than the former; though, on account of certain names who have patronized it, somewhat more respectable. If brutes come next to men in this imaginary scale, sure it cannot be said to rise gradually. I allow indeed, that horses are swifter and stronger than men; and that many animals have faculties of perception and action that we have not; the swallow, for example, which can fly; the dolphin, which can live under water; and the bee, which can extract honey from flowers. But in every respect wherein they can be compared, how far is the rational nature above the irrational! We have seen, that even in regard to Memory, which is common to both, the distance is inconceivably great. What then shall we think of this distance, when we consider it with a view to those powers, which form the glory, and indeed the distinguishing character of man; I mean, our capacities of speech, invention, and science, and those particulars in our frame, that entitle us to the denomination of moral, political, and religious beings? There is indeed a boundless variety in nature: and a scale gradually ascending might possibly be traced in some classes of being; as in the degrees of sagacity which belong to different brutes, and of intelligence as it appears in different men.

But,

But, how absurd is it to talk of an universal scale of things, when many of those things or ideas, that are mentioned as contiguous, are known to be separated by intervals of infinite extent! For such we must suppose the interval to be, between existence and nothing; between plants and animals; between a creature unconscious and irrational, and such a creature as man; and, which is still more apparent, between the highest order of created things, and the supreme, independent, and infinitely perfect Being, who is the Author of all. In a scale of beings, or a series of ideas, said to rise, one above another, by gradual ascent, we must imagine (if the words have any meaning) the contiguous beings or ideas to have some qualities in common, or at least to have similar qualities, differing, not so much in kind, as in degree. But in existence, for example, what quality is there, which can be understood, in any degree, or in any kind, to belong to non-existence? In what respect can that which is not organized be said to approach to that which is; or dry, barren mould to resemble the *fabrick* of a vegetable? Again, animals have sensation; plants have not: how can sensation, and the want of it, be considered as degrees of the same, or of kindred qualities! Moreover, man is capable of science, and endowed with consciousness, and a moral principle: can he, then, be supposed, in these respects, to be elevated, one degree only, above animals, that are destitute of a moral principle, and incapable of contemplation? Or does the wealth of him who has no wealth (if I may so speak) bear any proportion to that of a rich man?—And, lastly, is it possible to imagine, that any created being, the most glorious that can be conceived, should ever, after innumerable ages of improvement, approach within any distance less than infinite, of the Almighty, Eternal, and Self-existent Creator?

Humble as we ought to be, under a sense of our great and many imperfections, let us however entertain a right idea of human nature; remembering, that it was made in the image of God, and that it is destined for immortality. And, in all our inquiries, let it be our care, to guard against prejudice and vain theory, and confine our views to matters of fact, and to plain and practical truth.

## OF IMAGINATION.

## CHAP. I.

## General Account of Imagination.

ACCORDING to the common use of words, Imagination and Fancy are not perfectly synonymous. They are, indeed, names for the same faculty; but the former seems to be applied to the more solemn, and the latter to the more trivial, exertions of it. A witty author is a man of lively Fancy; but a sublime poet is said to possess a vast Imagination. However, as these words are often, and by the best writers, used indiscriminately, I shall not further distinguish them.

In what respect Imagination and Memory differ, was formerly explained. When we *remember*, we revolve or revise past perceptions, with a view to our experience of them, and to their reality. When we *imagine*, we consider the notion or thought now present to the mind, simply as it is in itself, without any view to real existence, or to past experience. Thoughts suggested by Memory may also be considered in this way: in which case they become what, in the style of modern philosophy, would be called Ideas of Imagination. Thus the features of a portrait, or of a person, whom I saw some time ago, may occur to my mind, and be for a while contemplated, without my considering, whether I ever saw such a thing before, or whether the idea be, or be not, a fiction of my own fancy. And sometimes, there will remain in the mind the idea of a particular event, of which we cannot say, whether we learned it from information, or only dreamed of it.

Addison, speaking of sight, in the four hundred and eleventh paper of the *Spectator*, says, “that it is the faculty which furnishes the Imagination with its ideas;” and, a little after, he adds, “that we cannot have a single image in the fancy, that did not make its first entrance through the sight.”—If by the term *Image* he mean, what he elsewhere calls, and what is commonly understood by the word, *idea*, it will follow, from this account, that men born blind, or who retain no Memory of light and colour, can have no Imagination. But this is not agreeable to fact. I am particularly acquainted with a person \*, who, having at the age of five months lost his sight by the small pox, retains not the idea of any thing visible; and is yet a good poet, philosopher, and divine, and, in a word, a most ingenious, as well as a most worthy, man. He dreams too, as frequently as other people; and dreams are universally ascribed to the fancy: and his writings prove, that he possesses, what every critick will allow to be, and what Addison himself would have called, a sublime Imagination.

Invention is by all philosophers considered, as an operation of the same faculty. Now one may invent, and consequently imagine, tunes, or sentiments, which one never heard or saw; and which cannot be perceived by *sight*, till committed to writing.—It would appear then, that Addison’s use of the word in question is rather too limited, when he says, that ideas derived from sight are the only objects of Imagination: which yet, perhaps, may have been the opinion of those, who first distinguished this power of the mind by a name derived from the word *image*.

Some authors define Imagination, “The simple apprehension of corporeal objects when absent.” But the common use of language would warrant a more comprehensive definition. The

\* The Reverend Dr. Blacklock of Edinburgh.

anxiety of a miser, and the remorse of a murderer, are not corporeal objects; and yet may be *imagined* by those who never felt them. Shakespeare, who was neither a murderer nor a miser, but on the contrary possessed a generous and benevolent heart, has expressed these feelings in such a manner, as will satisfy every reader, that his conception of them was equally just and lively.

In the language of modern philosophy, the word *Imagination* seems to denote; first, the power of apprehending or conceiving ideas, simply as they are in themselves, without any view to their reality: and secondly, the power of combining into new forms, or assemblages, those thoughts, ideas, or notions, which we have derived from experience, or from information.

These two powers, though distinguishable, are not essentially different. If one can apprehend, or imagine, a thing that one has seen, one may also imagine two or more such things united so as to form what has nothing similar to it in nature. If I, for example, have the idea of a dog's head and a man's body, it is easy for me to imagine them united in one and the same animal; to which my fancy can add wings, and horns, and cloven feet, and as many odd appendages as you please. These two faculties, therefore, of *Simple Apprehension* and *Combination* (as I shall take the liberty to call them) are so nearly allied, that there can be no harm in referring both to the Imagination or Fancy.

That the nature of this *Combining Power* may be the better understood, I must remark, that philosophers have divided our ideas, and other objects of perception, into Simple and Complex. A simple object is that which does not seem to consist of parts that can be conceived separate; as heat, cold, hunger, thirst, &c. A complex object consists of parts or qualities, which are separable, or may at least be conceived as such by the mind. The smallest grain of sand, the minutest particle of matter that sense can perceive, is a  
 complex



complex object; because it consists of parts that may be separated, and is characterized by qualities, which it is possible to think of apart from each other, as figure, colour, solidity, weight, &c.

Now all simple ideas, that is, all our notions of simple objects, are derived from experience; and cannot be described in words, so as to be understood by those who never perceived them. A man born deaf has no conception of sound; nor he who is born blind, of light or colour. And if we were to attempt to convey by description those simple ideas, to which nature has not opened an inlet by sensation, we should labour as ineffectually, as did that philosopher, who undertook to give a blind man a notion of scarlet. He told him, that it yielded a sensation at once lively and agreeable, that it was an emblem of courage, and ornamental to princes and great men; and, after specifying some of its other qualities, asked him, whether he had not now some idea of it. Yes, replied the other, Scarlet must be, from your account, the likest thing in the world to the sound of a trumpet.—Men born blind do, indeed, talk of things visible, and often with propriety. But this must be, either the effect of Memory, when they say of colours and light what they have heard said by others: or it must be with some figurative allusion; as when they speak of having *seen* such a person, or such a book, which, in their mouth, means no more, than their having been in company with the person, or heard the book read. For of the peculiar sensations conveyed by sight they must remain as ignorant, as we are of the phenomena of a world of spirits. Their dreams present them with nothing but different arrangements of those ideas which they have acquired by means of the other four senses. Even when they dream of light, which from their unhappy circumstances it is natural they should often do, as there is nothing they so earnestly desire, they still

fancy, that it is audible, or tangible; they never can conceive what it really is. For the wildest of our dreams are so far conformable to nature, as to be wholly made up of those simple or complex notions of things, wherewith experience has made us acquainted. Memory supplies the materials: all that fancy does in sleep, or can do, is variously to arrange them, so as to form new combinations, whereof some are less, and others more extravagant.

Of the simple or complex ideas derived from experience, the mind, when awake as well as in sleep, frames, as I observed already, or may frame, innumerable assemblages different from those that really exist. He who has seen ivory and a mountain, may conceive the colour, smoothness, and substance of the former, united with the shape and size of the latter; and so have a notion of an ivory mountain. The monstrous picture described by Horace, in the beginning of the *Art of Poetry*, with the head of a man, the neck of a horse, feathers of different birds, limbs of different beasts, and the tail of a fish, it is easy for us to conceive, and, if we know a little of drawing, to make visible in a picture. In fact, nothing is more easy than to form new combinations of this sort: the great, and the difficult, business of invention is, to make them agreeable and useful, consistent and natural.

This capacity of framing new assemblages is referred, as I said before, to the Imagination. Memory presents nothing to our view, but what we have actually perceived; so that a being endowed with Memory, but destitute of fancy, whatever knowledge he might acquire, would be incapable of invention. For all invention implies novelty; and that things or ideas are put together, which were never so put together before.

And, that the powers of invention and remembrance are different; so as that a person may possess the one in a high, and the other in a low degree, is almost too obvious to require proof.

Shakespeare and Aaron Hill were poets, and men of genius. The latter was a traveller, and wrote the history of his travels, and had enjoyed, besides, the advantage of a liberal education: the former had little learning, was never out of England, and passed a great part of his life in needy circumstances. From this account one would think, that Hill must have possessed a greater fund of ideas, than Shakespeare: and that he had more knowlege of books, of countries, and of other things which occur in reading, admits of no doubt. But Hill's inventive talent was not extraordinary; we find little new in him; and we say, without impropriety, that he had no great powers of Imagination. Whereas Shakespeare, with far less erudition, was in sentiments and images incomparably more abundant; and has indeed displayed a variety of invention, as well as a knowlege of nature, that is almost without example.— We every day meet with persons of good sense and clear apprehension; who can distinctly tell a story, or give an account of a book they have read, or of business they have been engaged in; but whose conversation, though it bespeaks a good Memory, shows no inventive talent. And others may be met with, who are witty and humourous, and strike out in their discourse many new ideas, who yet have no great strength of Memory, and little of that clearness of head, which is requisite to form a man of business.

## C H A P. II.

## Of the Association of Ideas.

## S E C T. I.

*Principles of Association. — First, Resemblance. — Secondly, Contrariety. — Thirdly, Nearness of Situation.*

**T**HE human soul is essentially active; and none of our faculties are more restless, than this of Imagination, which operates in sleep, as well as when we are awake. While we listen to a discourse, or read a book, how often, in spite of all our care, does the fancy wander, and present thoughts quite different from those we would keep in view! That energy, which lays a restraint upon the fancy, by fixing the mind on one particular object, or set of objects, is called Attention: and most people know, that the continued exercise of it is accompanied with difficulty, and something of intellectual weariness. Whereas, when, without attending to any one particular idea, we give full scope to our thoughts, and permit them to shift, as Imagination or accident shall determine, a state of mind which is called a Reverie; we are conscious of something like mental relaxation; while one idea brings in another, which gives way to a third, and that in its turn is succeeded by others; the mind seeming all along to be passive, and to exert as little authority over its thoughts, as the eye does over the persons who pass before it in the street. The succession of these wandering ideas is often regulated by Memory; as when the particulars of a place we have seen, or of a conversation we

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have

have witnessed, pass in review before us. At other times, our thoughts have less connection with reality, and follow each other in an order, in which, perhaps, they never appeared before.

The same thing is observable in those miscellaneous conversations, that are confined to no one particular topick, but in which every person says what occurs to him, according as it is suggested by what had been said by others. Here, though a variety of subjects, and a multitude of dissimilar ideas, be introduced, yet we may for the most part trace out the relations that unite them. And this is so well known, that, if any thing be said which appears to bear no relation to what went before, the audience are apt to take notice of it, and expect to be informed of the train of thinking, which could lead the speaker to an idea apparently so incongruous.—I have somewhere read or heard, that, in the time of those civil wars which occasioned the death of Charles the First, when some of the King's adherents were discoursing of the evils that threatened the royal party, one of them asked, what was the value of a Roman *denarius*. This question seemed to be very remote from the subject; and the company expressed their surprise, that a conversation of so great moment should be interrupted by so unseasonable a query. The gentleman asked pardon; and said, he was led to it by a train of thoughts that had just then passed through his mind: that the fate of their unfortunate sovereign seemed to him to resemble that of our Saviour when betrayed into the hands of his enemies; and that this had made him think of Judas the traitor, and of the price paid for his treachery, which was thirty pieces of silver, or, as he supposed, thirty Roman *denarii*.

When our thoughts follow one another in this manner, the transitions are often exceedingly quick; so that we shall be, this moment, thinking of one thing, and, the next, of something totally

totally different. And yet, perhaps, if we could recollect all the intermediate ideas, we should find, that, though the first and the last be very dissimilar, those that come next one another are all related. Julius Cæsar, for example, occurs to my mind. Upon him I may, if I please, fix my attention for a while, without suffering fancy to wander to any thing else. But, if it is under no restraint, a great variety of ideas may immediately present themselves. Cæsar leads me to think of Gaul, perhaps, which he conquered, and of Britain, which he invaded; of the barbarous state in which he found the inhabitants of this island; of savage life, in general, and the horrid practices that prevail in it, murder, rapine, human sacrifices, and the eating of human flesh. How different, I exclaim, is this abominable banquet, from those of the Hippomolgians celebrated by Homer, who lived on milk, and led a life of such purity, that Jupiter took pleasure in beholding it! Hence there is an easy transition to the golden age described by the poets, and to man's state of innocence before the fall.— I set out with Julius Cæsar, the most accomplished personage of antiquity; the next moment I was among cannibals, the disgrace of human nature; and, immediately after, the peace and the pleasures of paradise were before me. Ideas more dissimilar can hardly be imagined; and yet, the contiguous links in this chain are so connected, that one may naturally lead to another. And, if my reverie were to continue, ten thousand ideas might arise, equally diversified, and yet mutually related.

I do not say, that, of any number of successive ideas, there is *always* a mutual affinity between those which are next to each other. Fancy *often* is capricious, and presents combinations, that are unaccountably extravagant. And we may, no doubt, exchange any one thought for almost any other; even as, by a sudden turn, we may direct our eyes this instant to the south, and the next to  
the

the north. But the more natural procedure, and that which requires the least effort, is, in the latter case, to look at things as they lie in order and contiguous, and, in the former, to pass from one thought to others that bear a relation to it.

Since, then, there is, *for the most part*, a connection between those ideas that pass through the mind; it comes to be a matter worthy of curiosity, to inquire into the nature of this connection; and see, whether we can trace out any principles, whereby the succession, or Association, of our ideas may appear to be regulated. These principles are, no doubt, many and various: nor will I undertake, as some have done, to enumerate them all. Nor am I anxious, as some have been, to reduce them to two or three general ones. The more examples of this Association that we attend to, the greater number of associating principles we shall probably discover. But I confine myself to a few particulars.

1. One event or story leads us to think of another that is *like* it. We are often put in mind of an absent friend, by seeing a stranger who *resembles* him. *Resemblance*, then, is one of those associating principles, that lead our thoughts from one object to another. In other words, Ideas that are *similar*, or supposed to be such, are attractive of each other in our minds.

Hence the origin of metaphor, similitude, allegory, and those other figures of rhetoric, that are founded in *likeness*; multitudes of which occur, not only in poetry, and all good writing, but also in common discourse. We call a cunning person, a fox; and one who breeds dissent, a firebrand; a dull man, an ass; and an indecent, unmannerly fellow, a brute. The same trope is used, in the way of commendation, when we call an innocent babe, a lamb; a virtuous and beautiful person, an angel: or merely in order to convey a lively idea; as when, of a lean man it is said, that he is nothing but skin and bone; or of a tall man, that he

is a steeple. These are metaphors. And, in applying them, our fancy is led, from the person or thing we speak of, to the other person or thing whose name we make use of; on account of a supposed resemblance between them.

To talk metaphorically, and illustrate our thoughts in the way of allegory and similitude, is more common than one would imagine, not only with men of learning, but even with children and savages: and we are most apt to do so, when we give vent to any strong emotion. The following sentence is natural enough, and not too refined for common dialogue; and yet, the first clause is a metaphor, the second a similitude, and the third an allegory. "I was thunderstruck at the news; and stood for a time motionless, like a statue; but endeavoured to compose myself, by reflecting, that in the voyage of life calms and storms do generally succeed each other." Unlettered people, and nations whose language is in a rude state, have more frequent recourse to these figures, than persons of a copious elocution. The dialect of the vulgar abounds in proverbs, most of which, as they apply them, are allegories or similies. And the harangues of Indian chiefs, whereof specimens appear from time to time in the newspapers, are full of metaphor from beginning to end. This may show, how natural it is for the human mind, to associate similar ideas; or, to pass, from one idea or object, to another that is like it.

When the soul is occupied by any powerful passion, the thoughts that arise in it are generally similar to that passion, and tend to encourage it. Is a man joyful? his thoughts do all partake of the gaiety of his heart; and melancholy ideas disappear so totally, that he would find it no easy matter to recal them. Is he sad? he then ruminates upon pain and disappointment, and the uncertainty of human things; upon death, and the grave, and a thousand other gloomy objects. Anger, in like manner, gives the mind a tendency



dency to associate the congenial ideas of injury, reproach, and retaliation : as piety and benevolence call up the most delightful images of felicity and virtue, the rewards of the good, and the reformation of the wicked, society flourishing, and the whole universe united in harmony and love.—So that, if we know a person's character, or the passions that habitually prevail in him, we may guess, with no little assurance, in regard to the thoughts that would arise in his mind on any given occasion, that they would bear a resemblance to his predominant temper. And thus it is, that poets are enabled to preserve the decorum of characters ; and to assign to every person, whom they may introduce as an agent in their fable, those sentiments, and that conduct, which we should expect from such a person, if he were to make his appearance in real life.—If, then, we would keep uneasy thoughts at a distance, we must repress every disagreeable passion, as anger, revenge, envy, suspicion, and discontent ; and cherish piety, humanity, forgiveness, patience, and a lowly mind. For the latter bring along with them sweet and soothing ideas ; as painful thoughts and misery are the inseparable companions of the former.

2. Another associating principle is *Contrariety*. When we feel hunger or cold, we are more apt to think of food, or of heat, than of any thing else. The influence of this law is observable even in sleep. Our dreams, when we are hungry or thirsty, are all made up of eating or drinking ; or rather, of attempts to eat or drink : for, as the appetite remains unallayed, the idea of complete gratification does not occur ; but we fancy, that the drink is impure, or the food beyond our reach, or that something else continually interposes to disappoint us.

In surveying a great pile of ruins, is it not natural to say, How changed is this place from what it once must have been ! “ how doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people !”—and, while

our eyes dwell on the scene of desolation that is now before them, to revolve in our mind those ideas of festivity, splendour, and busy life, which we conceive to have been formerly realized on the same spot? We are told by Herodotus, that, when Xerxes, from a hill near the Hellespont, was taking a view of his vast army and navy, and beheld the sea covered with his ships, and the shores and plains of Abydos full of men, he wept to think that those multitudes would all be dead within a hundred years \*. The humanity of the thought is pleasing; and it pleases also on account of the contrast. From the acclamations that now rang in his ears, and the activity displayed in those unnumbered varieties of motion that were before his eyes, the mind of the Persian king was led, by a natural transition, to the opposite ideas of eternal rest and silence.

If contrast were not a natural bond of union among ideas, we should not be so much pleased with it in works of fancy. But in fact we find, that poets and other artists, whose aim is to give pleasure, are all studious of it. Homer frequently interrupts the description of a battle, with a similitude taken from still life or from rural affairs: and in this he has been imitated by succeeding poets; who have also, after his example, in the contrivance of characters, opposed the violent to the gentle, the cunning to the generous, and the proud to the humble; and, in the arrangement of their fable, diversified events by a like artifice; introducing a negotiation after a battle, a night-adventure after a day of business, a festival after a storm, a scene of joy after distress, and a glimpse of domestick tranquillity in the midst of tumult. On all these occasions we are pleased with the variety; and we are also pleased with the opposition, because it makes the variety more observable and surprising, and suits that propensity of the human mind, of

\* Herodot. lib. vii. Polymnia.

associating contraries, or passing from one extreme to another. Contrasted characters have this further advantage in poetry, that, by counteracting, they mutually exercise, one another, and occasion a full display of the peculiarities of each.

But the propensity I speak of is not at all times equally strong. When one is happy, one is unwilling to think of misery. And therefore, it would seem, that the influence of Contrariety, as an associating principle, is most powerful, when the mind is actuated by some *uneasy* emotion. While we suffer no inconvenience, the soul is tranquil, and the fancy is not apt to wander beyond the present scene. But solicitude and pain stimulate thought, and direct our view to those things that seem to promise an adequate relief. We think of coolness when panting under the heat of a summer sun,

O quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi  
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

But in extreme heat we should probably think of extreme cold. When King John is tortured with the burning heat of a mortal poison, Shakspeare does not make him think of coolness, for that was not the proper contrast to his feelings, but puts in his mouth the following exclamation.

Poison'd, ill fare! dead, and forsook, cast off,  
And none of you will bid the winter come,  
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw;  
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course  
Through my burn'd bosom; nor entreat the north  
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips,  
And comfort me with cold.

Nothing can be more natural than the direction here given to the imagination of the sufferer: and in the poetical, or pindarick, boldness of the style, there is no more extravagance, than might  
be

be expected from a person betrayed, and poisoned, frantick with pain, and in the agonies of death.

3. When the idea occurs of any place with which we are acquainted, we are apt to pass, by an easy and quick transition, to those of the adjoining places, of the persons who live there, and of the events that are known to have happened in that neighbourhood. Here the associating principle is neither Resemblance, nor Contrariety, but *Contiguity*, *Vicinity*, or nearness of situation\*. If there be not only Contiguity, but order, or systematick arrangement, the Association will be peculiarly strong. After seeing all the human bones separated, and lying side by side, the idea of one

\* Contiguity and Vicinity are not strictly synonymous; the former being the highest degree of the latter: but it is not necessary to be more explicit.—Perhaps, *Vicinity in time* ought also to have been mentioned as an associating circumstance: as our minds are sometimes led from one event to another that fell out about the same time. Yet I think this does not commonly and naturally happen, unless where the successive ideas are connected by some other Principle of Association. If, after hearing an event and the date of it, one were to subjoin, “That puts me in mind of something which “happened at the same time,” the company, if they were not mere chronologers, would be rather disappointed, to find, that what was said by the last speaker was not in any respect, but that of contemporaneity, related to what had been said by the other. Take an example. *Mr. A.* “So, Sir, as I was saying, I fell from my horse in the “middle of the river; and the weather was very cold; it being the thirtieth of “November.” *Mr. B.* “Sir, I have reason to remember the thirtieth of that “month; for that was the date of my little daughter Jane’s inoculation for the small “pox.”—Would not such a connection be somewhat ludicrous, from the *want of relation* between the two events? Yet *in time* they might be closely related, to a day, or even to an hour. But if *Mr. B.* were to speak thus: “Sir, it is remarkable that, on the very “day you mention, my little daughter narrowly escaped drowning;” or, “I was in as “great danger from fire, as you were from water;”—the Association would be allowed to be natural, from the *resemblance* of the one event, or from the *contrariety* of the other.—In matters of this kind, *dates* are not apt to take hold of the imagination, because they are seldom important. *Places* are visible things: and the images they leave in the memory (if I may be allowed the expression) are livelier and more accurately defined.

will

will not so readily introduce that of another, as if we had examined the entire skeleton. To an architect the fragment of a column conveys a notion of the whole pillar; and the outline of the shadow of a face which we know, is found to give a lively idea of all the features.

The sight of a place in which we have been happy or unhappy, renews the thoughts and the feelings that we formerly experienced there. With what rapture, after long absence, do we revisit the haunts of our childhood, and early youth! A thousand ideas, which had been for many years forgotten, now crowd upon the Imagination, and revive within us the gay passions of that romantick period. The same effect is produced, though perhaps in a fainter degree, when in a foreign land we talk of, or recollect, the place of our nativity. And from these, and other Associations of a like nature, arises in part that most important principle, the love of our country; whereof the chief objects are, our friends, and fellow-citizens, and the government that has so long protected us and our fathers; but in which is also comprehended a fondness for the very fields and mountains, the vales, the rocks, and the rivers, which formed the scenery of our first amusements and adventures.

Most persons feel something of this fondness: and those who do not, may yet admit the reality of it, when they are told, that the natives of certain countries, when abroad in foreign parts, do sometimes fall sick, and even die, of a desire to revisit their native land. The Swifs were formerly so liable to this malady, that they distinguished it by a particular name. The Scots, too, have suffered from it. And in general it has been thought, that the natives of a mountainous region are more subject to this infirmity, than those who have been born and bred in level countries. For precipices, rocks, and torrents, are durable things; and, being more striking to the fancy than any natural appearances in the plains, take faster hold of the memory; and may therefore more frequently recur to

the absent native, accompanied with an idea of the pleasures formerly enjoyed in those places, and with regret that he is now removed to so great a distance from them. To which we may add, that the daily contemplation of the grand phenomena of nature, in a mountainous country, elevates, and continually exercises, the Imagination of the solitary inhabitant; one effect of which is, to give those sensibilities to the nervous system, which render the mind in a peculiar degree susceptible of wild thoughts, and warm emotions. \*

On entering a place consecrated to religion, serious minds are generally conscious of devout impressions; the surrounding scene recalling some of those habits of thinking, which have been formed in this or in similar places. And, for the same reason, playhouses and ball-rooms, and other places of publick diversion, have a tendency to suggest thoughts of a different nature. Such is the effect of Custom, and of Contiguity, considered as Principles of Association.

\* See Essay, on Poetry and Music. Part i. chap. 6. section 3.

## S E C T. II.

*Principles of Association. — Fourthly, The Relation of Cause and Effect. Superstitions arising from this and the preceding Principle.*

4. *THINGS* related as cause and effect naturally suggest each other to the mind. When we think of the sun, we can hardly avoid thinking of the influence of his beams: the notion of snow, or of ice, brings along with it that of cold: the sight of a wound conveys an idea of the weapon that gave it, and of the pain that attends it. All men, and even children, have a propensity to think of, and inquire into, the *cause* of any event that attracts their notice; and are continually forming conjectures in regard to the *consequences* of their own, and other people's, conduct.

The same mutual attraction takes place among those objects and ideas, that *are supposed* to stand in the relation of Effect and Cause; even though in fact they have no influence upon each other. The falling of salt; the clicking of that little insect, which we call a death-watch; the twinkling of a glow-worm; the howling of a dog; or the shriek of an owl, have nothing to do with impending calamity: but to the superstitious, who regard them as omens, suggest that idea as effectually, as if they were known to be the real causes, or the certain fore-runners, of misfortune.

It is therefore incumbent on those, who superintend education, to instil right notions into the young mind, and guard it against these, and the like Associations; which, notwithstanding their absurdity, have often embittered human life, and even perverted mens ideas of the Divine Providence. Superstition is one of the worst diseases of the soul. It is equally unfriendly to happiness, to

rational piety, and to found philosophy. And this peculiar evil attends those forms of it which I now allude to; that one is not always proof against their influence, even when one is satisfied that they are unreasonable. At the falling of salt, or at finding the number of persons at table to be exactly thirteen, I have known people of good understanding exceedingly disconcerted: who would yet acknowledge, that they believed it was idle to take notice of such a thing; but that, having once looked upon it as ominous, they could not, on seeing it, divest themselves of apprehensions.

“ The ideas of goblins and spirits (says Locke) have really no more to do with darkness than with light: yet let but a foolish maid inculcate these often on the mind of a child, and raise them there together, possibly he shall never be able to separate them again so long as he lives: but darkness shall ever afterwards bring along with it those frightful ideas.”—I will not say, that children, or that men, either may be, or ought to be, as free from fear by night, as by day: darkness and solitude create some degree of horror in every mind; and, where our eyes give no distinct information of surrounding objects, we must be more exposed to danger, than where we have the free use of all our faculties. But I say, with Locke, that the notion of ghosts or goblins appearing in the dark is wholly artificial; being the effect of certain Associations, formed in infancy, and founded on those idle tales with which children are amused and terrified; and which, too often, even when they come to a right use of reason, continue to haunt them; and sometimes, especially in bad health, are attended with melancholy consequences. Certain it is, that children who never hear of ghosts are never afraid of them. Is it not, then, a matter of importance, to keep them ignorant of what superstitious people believe in regard to these idle tales? Addison justly remarks, that,



next to a good conscience and clear judgement, the greatest blessing in life is a sound Imagination. And he recommends piety, and rational habits of thinking, as the best preservative against those impertinent notions, whereby this faculty is liable to be perverted.

To the same cause, namely, to absurd Associations formed in early life from false opinions concerning Causes and Effects, it is owing, that weak minds have annexed to certain places the ideas of spirits, demons, and other dreadful beings. Hence churches and church-yards become objects of terror. And where a person has died, with circumstances of peculiar distress, the place has been supposed to be haunted by his ghost. So prevalent in former times was this folly, that there was hardly a large old house to be seen, which had not in it two or three apartments that were believed to be infested with troubled, or with evil spirits. Desolate houses, heaps of ruins, deep groves, the sides of rivers, and monumental mounds of earth, or heaps of stones, were avoided in the night by the astonished peasant; as if they had been the abodes of robbers, or beasts of prey.

A young mind may be argued out of such fancies: and therefore it is worth while to animadvert a little upon them; and show, that, though the stories circulated concerning them were not altogether fabulous, it would not follow, that there is any thing supernatural in the case.

So much are we accustomed to the bustle of active life, that profound silence alone startles the Imagination, and, as many accurate observers of nature have remarked, is apt to produce fear\*. Silence, as well as darkness, implies some degree of danger; by intimating that we are at a distance from the protection and other

\* *Ipsa silentia terrent. Virgil.* — *Terret solitudo, et tacentes loci. Tacitus.*

comforts of society.—Besides, when the senses have nothing to employ them, the mind is left (if I may so speak) a prey to its own thoughts; the Imagination becomes unmanageable; the nerves lose their wonted vigour; and now, the smallest sound is alarming, and the most common object appears to the eye distorted and disproportioned; nay we fancy that we see, and that we hear, what exists only in our own Imagination. When the human frame is thus prepared for the reception of extravagant ideas, the senses are as easily imposed on, as when one raves in a fever: and then, if we be inclined to superstition, and in circumstances that favour it, who can tell what may follow!

Now in a large and uninhabited building, like a church, the wind may howl; doors and windows may clap; the creaking of rusty hinges may be heard; a stone, or a bit of plaster, may drop with some noise from the mouldering wall; the light of the moon may gleam unexpectedly through a cranny, and, where it falls on the broken pavement, form an appearance not unlike a human face illuminated, or a naked human body, which the peasant, whose chance it is to see it, may readily mistake for a ghost, or some other tremendous being. In the forsaken apartments of an old castle, rats and jack-daws may raise an uproar, that shall seem to shake the whole edifice to the foundation. Piles of ruins, especially when surrounded with trees and underwood, give shelter to owls, and wild cats, and other creatures, whose screaming, redoubled by echoes, may to the superstitious ear seem to be, as Shakspeare says, “no mortal business, nor no sound That the earth owns.” In deep groves, by twilight, our vision must be so indistinct, that a bush may, without enchantment, assume the form of a fiend or monster; and the crashing of branches, tossed by the wind, or grated against one another, may sound like groans and lamentations. By the side of a river, in a still or in a stormy evening,

evening, many noises may be heard, sufficient to alarm those, who would rather tremble at a prodigy, than investigate a natural cause: a sudden change, or increase of the wind, by swelling the roar of the far-off torrent, or by dashing the waters in a new direction against rocks or hollow banks, may produce hoarse and uncommon sounds; and the innocent gambols of a few otters have been known to occasion those yells, which the vulgar of this country mistake for laughing or crying, and ascribe to a certain goblin, who is supposed to dwell in the waters, and to take delight in drowning the bewildered traveller.

These, and the like considerations, if duly attended to, would overcome many of those terrors that haunt the ignorant and the credulous; restore soundness to the Imagination; and, as Persius says, in his usual rough but expressive manner, “pull the old grandmother out of our entrails.” And the habit of encountering such imaginary terrors, and of being often alone in darkness, will greatly conduce to the same end. The spirit of free inquiry, too, is in this, as in all other respects, friendly to our nature. By the glimmering of the moon, I have once and again beheld, at midnight, the exact form of a man or woman, sitting silent and motionless by my bedside. Had I hid my head, without daring to look the apparition in the face, I should have passed the night in horror, and risen in the morning with the persuasion of having seen a ghost. But, rousing myself, and resolving to find out the truth, I discovered, that it was nothing more, than the accidental disposition of my clothes upon a chair.—Once I remember to have been alarmed at seeing, by the faint light of the dawn, a coffin laid out between my bed and the window. I started up; and recollecting, that I had heard of such things having been seen by others, I set myself to examine it, and found, that it was only a stream of yellowish light, falling in a particular manner upon the  
floor,

floor, from between the window-curtains. And so lively was the appearance, that, after I was thoroughly satisfied of the cause, it continued to impose on my sight as before, till the increasing light of the morning dispelled it.—These facts are perhaps too trivial to be recorded: but they serve to show, that free inquiry, with a very small degree of fortitude, may sometimes, when one is willing to be rational, prove a cure to certain diseases of Imagination.

Does, then, all that has been said, and believed, concerning preternatural sights and sounds, amount to no more than this, that men have, in every age, been imposed on, by the dreams of a distempered fancy? Have such things no existence, but in the brain of the visionary?—In answer to this, I might quote Plutarch, who, after recounting some prodigies, has the following remark. “ To be too confident, either in believing, or in disbelieving, such things, is unsafe, on account of human weakness, which is confined within no boundary, and has not the command of itself; but sometimes runs into vain superstition, and sometimes into a neglect and contempt of religion. It is best to be cautious, and to avoid extremes.”

That visions were seen, and celestial voices heard, in the days of antient prophecy, is undeniable; and that, for effecting purposes of importance, the same thing *may* have happened, even in latter times, does not wholly exceed belief: but no one, I think, can be blamed for rejecting, as fabulous, the vulgar stories of ghosts and apparitions. As far as my knowledge of nature extends, I see no reason for admitting them; as far as I have examined their evidence, I find it unsatisfactory: and I do not at present recollect one instance of the kind, which may not be accounted for, upon one or other of the principles abovementioned.

Of this we are certain, that neither disembodied spirits, nor good nor evil angels, can become visible to mortals, without the special appointment of a wise Providence; and, therefore, that none but wicked men can have any reason to be afraid of them. And Scripture, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, plainly intimates, that such extraordinary events are not to be expected, even in cases that seem to us to be of the last importance; for that we have already, from reason and from revelation, every notice of the economy of unseen worlds, that could be of any real use to us. “Let us endeavour” (as Addison has well expressed it) “to establish to ourselves an interest in him, who holds the reins of the whole creation in his hand, and moderates them after such a manner, that it is impossible for one being to break loose upon another, without his knowledge and permission.”

## S E C T. III.

*The same Subject. — Custom, an associating Principle.*

**I**T was hinted, and some of the preceding examples imply, that *Custom* is a principle of Association. Its influence is powerful and extensive. Two objects, or ideas, that are not similar, nor contrary, nor contiguous, nor related as cause and effect, or in any other way, may, by appearing once or twice in the same groupe, acquire an affinity no less intimate with respect to the Imagination, than if art or nature had combined them in one permanent assemblage; and the one shall suggest the other to the mind as readily as the idea of a door or window suggests that of a house.—You may have heard one of the common people, in order to amuse his companions who were not in the secret, offer to lay a wager, that they should never pare their nails on Monday without thinking of the fox. What connection, one would say, is there between the nails, or the act of paring them on the second day of the week, and that animal? Truly none. But when you are once led to take notice of these ideas thus associated, you may afterwards find, they will so adhere, as that, if you attend to the one, the other will immediately present itself.

Many of our actions do in this way suggest certain thoughts, from no other discernible cause, but that their union, which at first was accidental, having been once and again repeated or renewed, or once accompanied with some striking circumstance, has settled into a permanent Association. If, for example, while I am performing a certain piece of musick, or while I am making a visit at the house of a friend, I should receive some very agreeable,

or very disagreeable, intelligence, it is not unlikely, that the same musick, or a repetition of the visit, will afterwards put me in mind of that intelligence, or at least convey some vague idea of good or of bad fortune. Or if, in my walks, I should, for several days, meet unexpectedly, in one place, with one and the same person, distinguished by such qualities, good or bad, as would make me attend to him, it would not be wondered at, if the ideas of that place and person should ever after mutually suggest each other to my mind. In these cases Contiguity would co-operate with Custom in establishing the Association; which would probably be stronger or weaker, in proportion as the coincidence of the objects was accompanied, more or less, with surprize, joy, sorrow, or any other painful or pleasurable emotion.

Whence comes it, that, on hearing the sounds, or seeing the characters, of a known language, the mind makes so quick a transition to the thing signified, that it seems to overlook the impression made on the eye or ear, and to attend to the meaning only? Is it not, because the articulate sound, or the written character, has long been associated with the idea signified, and has formed in the mind a habit of passing instantaneously from the one to the other? In like manner, and for the same reason, the thoughts, that occur to us, do instantly suggest the words, by which they are wont to be expressed; and that whether we write, or speak, or only meditate. For although words and thoughts are different things (as appears from this, that deaf men think, who know nothing of words) yet words are, as it were, the dress, or the guise, in which our thoughts present themselves; so that we cannot revolve ideas in our minds, without revolving words at the same time; even as we cannot think of the character of an absent friend, without recollecting his visible appearance.

Men, who were born deaf, and have never been taught to read, do probably, in attending to their thoughts, especially to their abstract notions, revolve those visible signs by which they are accustomed to express them. If, for example, it be their way to signify *good*, by holding up their thumb, and *evil*, by stretching out the little finger, it is, I think, probable, that, in their minds, the ideas of Good and Evil will be accompanied with those of the thumb and little finger: these organs being as really their signs for those ideas, as the words *good* and *evil* are ours. If they have acquired the ready use of written language, it is reasonable to suppose, that they will associate their abstract notions with the visible appearance of the corresponding words, as printed or written. But this is only conjecture. For I have never had any conversation upon this subject with men born deaf; and I believe it would not be easy to make them comprehend the questions that might lead to the illustration of it.

In nothing do we make a more rapid transition from the sign to the thing signified, than in judging of the distance, magnitude, and figure, of things, from their visible appearance. The eye perceives only light and colour: yet by the eye we estimate figure, and magnitude, and consequently distance; because we have been always *accustomed* to take certain arrangements of colour and light for the signs of those tangible qualities. And this estimation is so instantaneous, that we think we see the magnitude, the figure, and the distance, when in fact we only see colours and light variously disposed. Thus we in some measure mistake a judgment for a sensation; and are led by the sign to the thing signified, almost without being conscious that we perceive the sign at all. The Association here is as strong, as between words and ideas; but it begins to be formed at an earlier period. It begins, as soon as we  
can



can use our hands for the purpose of perception; and is completed long before we are capable of rational inquiry.\*

Musicians express their notes, and the masters of dancing their motions and attitudes, by signs or symbols delineated on paper;  
in

\* This discourse was addressed at first to those who were supposed to be acquainted with opticks. To make the passage intelligible to some readers, the following illustration may be necessary.

1. By *Distance* I here mean, the space between us and other things. Blind men perceive, and can measure it, by Touch; that is, by stretching out their hand, or walking forward, till they come in contact with the distant object. And, from the instance of a young man, who had been born blind, and who was made to see at the age of fourteen (his cataracts being then couched by the famous Cheselden) it appears, that Sight alone, unaided by touch, would not make distance perceptible. This boy, when he first opened his eyes, perceived light and colour, which however seemed to touch the organ of sight; and it was by stretching out his hand, or walking up to the coloured object, that he found out its distance: the very way in which he was wont to estimate distance, while he was blind. Afterwards, observing, that certain changes in the visible appearance of bodies do always accompany a change of distance, he fell upon a method of estimating the distance by the visible appearance: and his method was the same with ours. For, while a body retires from the eye, its visible appearance becomes smaller, its colours less lively, and its outlines less distinct; and a number of intermediate objects, more or fewer according to the distance, appear between us and it. And hence, a certain visible appearance comes to be the sign of a certain distance. And if a painter can imitate this visible appearance, the objects he draws in an artificial landscape will seem to be, some of them near, and others remote, though all are really at the same distance from the eye. Those that are to seem near must be vivid in colour, large in size, distinct in outline, and separated from the eye of the spectator by few or no intermediate objects: those that are intended to appear as if they were more remote, must be smaller in size, more faint in colour, and in outline more indistinct, and must seem to be separated from the spectator by a greater number of intermediate objects.

The heavenly bodies are always seen at the same apparent distance; and therefore we know not what change in their visible appearance a change of distance might occasion. To ascertain their distance by touch, is impossible; and between them and us there are no intermediate objects of known magnitude, to enable us to judge of it. Hence to the eye they all seem to be indefinitely, and equally, distant; and, being scattered over the whole sky, make every part of it seem indefinitely, and equally, distant;

in the use of which, as in reading and writing, their minds instantly pass from the view of the sign to that meaning which custom has annexed to it: and, if they choose to play, or dance, their fingers, or limbs, immediately perform the action, that produces

and, consequently, give to the whole sky the appearance of part of the inside of a sphere.—Moreover, the horizon seems, to the eye, to be further off than the zenith; because between us and the former there lie many things, as fields, hills, waters, which we know to occupy great space, whereas between us and the zenith there are no considerable things of known dimensions. And therefore, the heavens appear like the segment of a sphere, and less than a hemisphere, in the centre of which we seem to stand. And the wider our prospect is, the greater will the sphere appear to be, and the less the segment.

2. All colour is extended; and, Colour being an object of sight, *Extension* must be so too. But of that extension, whose distance is unknown, our eye must be a very incompetent judge. Now Distance, as we have seen, is originally perceived by touch: and, therefore, from touch our first distinct ideas of extension must be derived. So that if a man, endued with sight, were to be fixed all his days immoveably in one place, and deprived of the means of gaining experience by touch, that man could never, from the information of his own senses, receive any accurate knowledge of extension; though his eyes would no doubt give him some confused idea of it.

3. The same reasoning holds in regard to *Magnitude*, or limited extension. Magnitude is either tangible, or visible. The former is always the same: the latter changes with every change of distance. A man of six feet is always six feet high, whatever be his situation in regard to us: change of place making no change in his real or tangible magnitude. But the visible magnitude of this man may be six feet, or not one foot, according as we view him at the distance of two feet, or of two miles; for his magnitude appears to our eye greater or less, according as the angle, subtended by his image in the retina of our eye, is greater or less. Decrease of apparent magnitude, faintness of colour, indistinctness of outline, and the number of intermediate objects, help us to judge both of the magnitude, and of the distance of things: and of two bodies equally distant, or supposed to be equally distant, that which has the greatest visible magnitude is conceived to have the greatest tangible magnitude. But, without touch, we should not know distance, nor, consequently, distinguish the tangible magnitude from the visible; in which case it is evident, that our knowledge of magnitude would be very indefinite.

When by any accident we think an object nearer than it really is, its visible appearance will seem smaller than it really is: and if we think its distance greater than the reality, its visible magnitude will appear larger. To a man bewildered in mist objects seem larger than the life, because their faint appearance conveys the idea of great distance:

produces the intended effect; just as, when we choose to express ourselves by speech or writing, the idea no sooner appears in the mind, than our fingers direct the pen in tracing out the customary characters, and our organs of speech assume that configuration which

tance: and to spectators in the theatre the player on the stage appears taller than he really is, when the scenery, or any other contrivance, makes him look as if he were more remote than he really is. On the same account, the sun and moon seem larger in the horizon, than in the meridian; for in the former situation they appear at the greatest distance; either because the horizon, for a reason already given, seems more remote than the zenith, or because the atmosphere, being more full of vapour towards the horizon, makes the heavenly bodies appear fainter, and consequently more distant. A man on the top of a steeple seems smaller to those below, than the same man would seem to the same persons, and at the same distance, on level ground; which depends on the same principle. For on level ground we can judge pretty accurately of distance, because we have frequent occasion to estimate distance on level ground; but of the distance of things above us we cannot judge so accurately; first, because we are less accustomed to do it; and secondly, because, if the object be very high like a steeple, there are no contiguous things with which we may compare it so as to ascertain its magnitude, and the distance of its higher parts. And besides, as the parts near the top, on account of their distance, appear less than they really are, we think the whole steeple less and shorter than it really is, and consequently imagine, that the top is not so far from us, as it is in reality. And hence, when we go up by ladders, or by stairs, we are surprized to find the journey longer than we expected.

And here, it is proper to distinguish the *real* visible magnitude of things from their *apparent* visible magnitude. Of the same object, seen at the same distance, the *real* visible magnitude is always the same; whence the laws of perspective, as far as they relate to magnitude, may be ascertained geometrically. But the *apparent* visible magnitude of distant objects may be considerably affected by the imagination of the spectator, or rather by his opinion of their distance. For this opinion, and the visible sensation, operating upon his mind at the same time, do in some measure interfere with and confound each other. And he thinks, that a certain visible object *appears* to be of a certain dimension, because his idea of its distance determines him to believe, that it *is* of that dimension.

4. Figure is either plane or solid. *Plane figure*, or limited superficies, cannot be distinctly perceived without touch; as was proved already. Of every *solid figure* some parts are more distant from us than others: but distance is perceived originally by touch: therefore, so must solid figure.

A solid

which fits them for uttering the customary sounds. On these, and the like occasions, the power of habit, early begun and long continued, is wonderfully great. To the young musician how difficult is it, and to the expert performer how easy, to express on his instrument, or with his voice, the meaning of the musical characters that are laid before him! All varieties of articulate sound are quickly acquired by children, even in cases, in which a very nice adjustment of the articulating organs may be necessary: but when

A solid body presents to our eye nothing but a certain disposition of colours and light. We think we *see* the prominency, or the cavity, when in fact we see only the light, or the shade, occasioned by it. This light and shade, however, we learn by experience to consider as the sign of a certain solid figure. And if a painter, by means of colour, can exactly imitate this light and shade, his work will appear to the eye to have all the prominencies and cavities of the solid body, though it be delineated on a plain and smooth surface. It is difficult for ordinary eyes to perceive, and attend to, the exact visible appearance of a solid body: our attention being engaged, less by the visible appearance, or sign, than by the solid figure, or thing signified. And this habit, of attending more to the latter than to the former, arises from our concern for our own welfare; which may be affected by the nearness or solidity of bodies, but not by their visible appearance. Nor is it strange, that, in this case, we should attend more to the thing signified, than to the sign. For in the use of language, as observed above, the same thing happens. In reading a book, or hearing a discourse, we attend less to the shape of the letters, or to the sound of the words, than to the ideas signified by those words or letters: the objects of sight and of hearing are overlooked, and we mind only, or chiefly, the objects of the understanding.

It appears then, that Distance, Extension, Magnitude, and Figure, are originally perceived, not by sight, but by touch: and that we come to judge of them by sight, when we have learned from long experience, that certain visible appearances do always accompany, and signify, certain distances, extensions, magnitudes, and figures. But we get this knowledge so early in life (for we must begin to acquire it, as soon as we begin to see, and to move) that we lose all memory of its commencement and progress. Yet some of us may remember the time, when we thought that the sky, then considered as a transparent and solid concave, rested on the tops of the mountains that bounded our prospect, and that it was impossible to go beyond them: a proof, that our powers of estimating distance by sight were then confined within a very narrow circle.

a grown man attempts to speak a foreign language for the first time, he finds the difficulty almost insurmountable.

The figures of short hand, and those characters, used in China, and elsewhere, which signify not simple sounds, but entire words, do, like our words and letters, convey ideas to the people who have acquired the *habit* of annexing to them a certain meaning. But when men express themselves emblematically, *Similitude* is the associating principle that leads to the interpretation. For an emblem is an allegory addressed to the eye; and every allegory is founded in likeness. Thus the picture, which represents two boys, the one in the act of trimming a candle, and the other in that of attempting to blow out the sun with a pair of bellows, is an emblem, which, on account of the similitude of the two cases, conveys an idea of the folly of those men, who, trusting to the weak, transient, and artificial light of their own prejudices, reject, and even endeavour to extinguish, the strong, steady, and eternal radiance of the gospel. In these, and the like contrivances, there is a studied obscurity; they being, like riddles, intended to amuse the fancy by exercising it; which they would not do, if their signification were as well ascertained, as that of words and letters. And therefore all minds are not equally capable of expounding them. One, who is not conversant in figurative language; or who happens to be unacquainted with that part of nature, of history, or of fable, to which the emblem alludes, may labour in vain to find out its signification.

On Associations formed by accident, and established by *custom*, many of the pains and pleasures of life depend. That which in itself would be indifferent becomes agreeable, or the contrary, according to the nature of the affections, or ideas, to which it may have given rise on a former occasion. An insignificant tune, if we have once heard it in an agreeable place, or sung by an agree-

able person, or when we were happy, will give us pleasure when heard again, by recalling those ideas of delight that accompanied the first performance \*. A present, however trifling, preserved as the memorial of a friend, derives inestimable value from its power of enlivening our idea of the giver, and renewing those kind emotions, whereof that person is the object. One would think, that the sports and adventures of children could not be interesting to men: yet with what satisfaction do we talk over such things with an old schoolfellow! They bring again to view the scenery of our early days, which is an idea particularly soothing to the fancy; and revive within us a variety of pleasing passions, wherewith they have long been associated.

Things in themselves disagreeable may by association become pleasing. Des Cartes somewhere mentions, that he had all his life a partiality for persons who squinted; and that, in his endeavours to trace out the cause of a taste so singular, he at last recollected, that when a boy he had been fond of a girl who had that blemish. Friends and lovers frequently contract a liking to those peculiarities of each other, that appear rather ungainly to the rest of the world: which, by the by, is a lucky circumstance: for if all men had a taste for the same qualities in their own species, a few might be gratified, but the majority would be disappointed. We have heard even of proud and absolute princes, who were the slaves of women that had neither virtue nor beauty to recommend them. Not that a bad heart, or uncomely figure, can ever of itself inspire love; but because, when united with other qualities, it may, in consequence of associations founded in habit, have acquired the power of introducing pleasurable ideas into the mind of the besotted admirer.

\* See an Essay on Poetry and Musick, as they affect the mind. Part i. Chap. 6.

Further: What in itself would be agreeable, may, if it has at any time been accompanied with disagreeable ideas, awaken emotions of a painful kind. A memorial of a dear friend, which during his life was so delightful, will excite the most lively sorrow when he is dead, and oblige us perhaps, for our own ease, to keep it concealed in some repository, with a resolution to see it no more. There are sorts of food, neither unpleasant nor unwholesome, that some people cannot eat; and, as Locke observes, there are vessels both cleanly and convenient, out of which one would not choose to drink; on account of some disgusting association. A platter, for example, in which we had seen a sow guzzling, or food resembling a medicine that had lately turned our stomach, would create abhorrence; especially if our nerves were delicate; whatever reason we might have to believe, that the former was now clean, and the latter palatable. Locke mentions a gentleman, who had been cured of a dangerous disease by a very offensive operation in surgery. He entertained the highest regard for the operator, and the warmest gratitude for his services; but could never after endure the sight of him.

Would it be expedient, or decent, to sing a psalm to the tune of a common ballad, or a common ballad to the tune of a psalm? And yet, perhaps, in itself, and previously to the influence of habit, the ballad-tune might have suited the psalm, or the psalm-tune the ballad. But when we have once and again heard certain notes accompanied with certain words, the words, or the notes, heard separate, will mutually suggest each other. So that, if such a transposition were to be made, it would raise in every person of sensibility a mixture of jarring ideas, which, by blending things profane with things holy, and seriousness with laughter, would debase the imagination, and impair that strength of mind, by which we retain the command of our own thoughts. For how

is it possible, that our devotion should be promoted to-day, by the same things, which yesterday, in the hour of relaxation, led us to think of drinking and merriment, and the amours of Strephon and Chloe!—Those sectaries, therefore, (and such are said to be among us) who either adapt their psalms to the measures, or sing them with the musick, of common songs, must be very ignorant of human nature, or very inattentive to the right performance of this part of worship. Nothing connected with levity, or with trivial passions, should ever be seen or heard in a place appropriated to the solemnities of religion: and, in a church, even on a week day, I should think it not less unseemly to play a hornpipe on the organ, than to dance one in the area. No person is less an enemy, than I am, to wit and humour, to singing and dancing. I presume, that the Deity would not have qualified us for these amusements, or made them profitable to health, and to virtue, if he had not meant that we should enjoy them. But they never can be lawful, when they are indecent. And indecent they must be, when unsuitable to times and places; or when they have a tendency to pervert the mind, by irrational or impure associations.

Upon the same principle, I must condemn all those allusions to the doctrine and phraseology of Scripture, that are intended to raise laughter. Such may, no doubt, have been sometimes made, both in writing and in conversation, without any bad meaning. But it is a dangerous, and may be a fatal, amusement. It gradually lessens our reverence for holy things: and, if we have ever been accustomed to join together, though with no evil purpose, ludicrous ideas and religious truths, it will be singular indeed, if, one time or other, on some solemn occasion, our fancy does not present us with ideas, which, though formerly amusing, may now be the objects of horror, and such as we would give  
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the world to have been able to keep at a distance.—It is shocking to consider, how frequently these profane witticisms occur in some of the most popular writers of the last age, particularly Dryden, Congreve, and Swift; Pope himself is not free from them. Never retail such things in conversation; revolve them not in your mind; pass them over slightly when they come in your way; and forget them as soon as possible. Such is the weakness of our nature, that they may in an unguarded moment make us laugh; but it would have been better for us, if they had provoked our indignation.

To proceed. We are told, that, in the age of Richard the second, about four hundred years ago, the peaks or tops of the shoes, worn by people of fashion, were of so enormous a length, that, in order to bear them up, it was necessary to tie them to the knee. And we learn from Cowley, that in his days ladies of quality wore gowns as long again as their body; so that they could not stir to the next room, without a page or two to carry their train. What ridiculous disproportion! we exclaim: what intolerable inconvenience! Is it possible, that the taste of our forefathers could be so perverted, as to endure such a fashion! But let us not be rash in condemning our forefathers, lest we should unwarily pass sentence upon ourselves. Have we never seen, in our time, forms of dress equally inconvenient, and yet equally fashionable? Does a shoe of four and twenty inches in length disfigure or encumber the one extremity of the human body more, than a head-dress two feet high does the other? Or is it a greater hindrance to the amusements, or more hurtful to the health, of a fine lady, to drag after her two dozen superfluous yards of silk, than to sit two hours in a morning under the discipline of the curling iron, or totter upon a sharp-pointed shoe-heel, which every moment threatens her ankle with disloca-

tion? In fact, as the world goes, former and latter ages, and the male and the female sex, may mutually say, in regard to absurdity of dress, what the poet says, when speaking of that wildness of invention which prevails among poets and painters,

—hanc veniam damus, petimusque vicissim.

This privilege we grant, and ask it in return.

Now, how are we to account for the prevalency of fashions so uncouth, and so inconvenient? It is to be accounted for, in part, from the power of *Custom*, as an associating principle: The fashion may be improper, and, when first brought in, ridiculous: but the mere habit of seeing it will gradually overcome our aversion: and, when we have long seen it worn by persons of rank, beauty, virtue, or wisdom, and on occasions of the greatest festivity or solemnity, it acquires in our fancy a connection with many pleasing ideas: and whatever is so connected must itself be pleasing.

An African negro has from his birth lived among people of a black colour, with flat noses, thick lips, and woolly hair. His father, and mother, and all his relations, his friend, his mistress, and his sovereign, have all the same cast of features and complexion. He has heard, perhaps, of Europeans, or he may have seen some of them; of whom he knows little more, than that their colour is white, that they come from a far country, and are remarkable for many strange customs; that they enslave and oppress black men, because they are black, and buy and sell them, like cattle, in a market; force them away from their country and friends to remote regions from which they never return; scourge them for the slightest faults, and even put them to death on frivolous pretences. With what a multitude of disgusting ideas, in the mind of this negro, must the European complexion

complexion be associated; and, with how many agreeable ones, his own! Is it not, then, as natural for him, to have that predilection for African features, which we have for those of Europe, —as long, at least, as he remains in his own country? For, if he were to live among us, and to be treated with that humanity, which, as a man, and as a stranger, he has a right to demand, and will certainly receive, from every Christian, his dislike to our lineaments and colour would gradually abate, because they would soon come to be associated with many pleasing images. Custom has, indeed, a very powerful influence, in determining our notions of beauty. The natives of a certain province among the Alps are distinguished by an extraordinary swelling under the chin; owing, it is said, to the snow-water which they are obliged to drink a great part of the year; and there, we are told, that none are accounted handsome, but they whose chins hang down upon the breast.

## S E C T. IV.

*Origin of our Ideas of Beauty, — in COLOUR, — in FIGURE, — in ATTITUDE, — in MOTION, — partly accounted for, from the Influence of Custom, as an associating Principle. — Beauty of Countenance — Standard of Beauty.*

I Said, that, in determining our notions of Beauty, Custom has a very powerful influence. It might have been said, more explicitly, that “ from associations founded in habit, many, or “ perhaps most, of those pleasing emotions are derived, which accompany the perception of what in things visible is called *Beauty*: “ those COLOURS, FIGURES, GESTURES, and MOTIONS, being “ for the most part accounted BEAUTIFUL, which convey to the “ mind pleasurable ideas; and those ugly, or not beautiful, which “ impart suggestions of an opposite or different nature.” This deserves a particular inquiry.

FIRST, as to COLOURS: It is true, that some give pleasure, because they affect the mind with a lively sensation. Gold, and silver, and flowers, and gaudy feathers, are admired by children and savages, on account of their brilliancy. The moon is to most infants a captivating object: I have seen a boy of fifteen months not a little offended, because he could not have it for a plaything. Bright colours naturally draw attention. To look at burning coals is hurtful to sight: yet few, even of those who know this, can keep from staring on the fire.—It is also true, that some colours are accounted beautiful, because they cherish the organ of sight, as Green; or because they have that character which we term *delicacy*, and yield a sensation at once lively and gentle, as pale red, and

light blue ; or because they are supposed to be emblematical of moral qualities, as scarlet, blue, and white, which we sometimes consider as the symbols of valour, constancy, and innocence.—It is further admitted, that colours, which look as if they were stained or sullied, or which are so mixed, or so indefinite, that we scarce know what name to give them, are not generally admired, on account, perhaps, of the dulness or ambiguity of the sensation wherewith they affect us. Those gradations, however, and shades of colour, that appear in flowers, in the plumage of the peacock and other birds, in the rainbow, in the evening and morning sky, and in many natural objects, are wonderfully beautiful ; when they so melt away into one another, that, though we discern the change, we cannot mark the boundary. But in these cases, it is not so much the mere delicacy or splendor of the colours that charms the eye, as that inimitable art (if I may so express myself) with which they are blended, and which inspires every beholder with pleasing admiration, as far surpassing the highest efforts of human dexterity. Outward circumstances, too, must have some effect. The calmness of an evening, and the freshness of a morning sky, the magnificent concave of heaven, the fragrance of the flowers, and the glorious arch of the rainbow, make us contemplate their colours with particular delight. For where beauty of colour is united with elegance, or dignity of form, or with any other agreeable circumstance, these qualities mutually adorn each other : and we love the beauty more, on account of the greatness or goodness ; and admire the greatness and approve the goodness more, on account of the beauty. Virtue itself, says Virgil, appears to advantage in a beautiful person\*.

\* *Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore virtus.* *Æn.* v. 344.

In fact, the beauty of colours depends so much on the ideas with which they may happen to have been associated by custom, that the same colour shall be beautiful in one object, and in another ugly, for no other reason, but because in the one it brings along with it some pleasing, and in the other some painful, recollection. Greenness in the fields is beautiful; because it conveys to the beholder many sweet ideas of fragrance, and plenty, and happy seasons, as well as because it refreshes the organ of sight: but in the human countenance the same colour would strike with horror, by suggesting a great variety of disagreeable thoughts. The liquid vermilion of the lips, and the “purple light of love” that illuminates the cheek of youth, we admire as the signs of health, innocence, vivacity, and warm affection; but if the same ideas had been suggested by white cheeks and white lips, we should certainly have given the preference to these. The glow of a blush is enchanting; as it betokens modesty and gentleness: but the same colour, if known to be the effect of violent passion, would for a time divest the finest face in the world of more than half its charms. The rainbow, if believed to be a sure presage of plague or hurricane, would be a tremendous phenomenon: and an image, like that which occurs to the frantick Lear,

To have a thousand with red burning spits  
Come hissing in upon them,

would be equally brilliant and horrible.

Female cheeks, flaming with artificial red, cannot sure have any intrinsic grace; and are far from recommending themselves by concomitant ideas of delicacy, purity, or sweetness: yet in the eye of a French *petit maitre* they are delightful and divine; because to him they suggest the most transporting idea he can conceive, that of being in the fashion.—To the same cause may be imputed

the continuance of this, and the like practices in savage life. I say the *continuance*; for I suppose, that among barbarians they took their rise from some remote views to publick good, and might have been at first intended, partly to defend the skin from insects, and partly to render the human visage terrible to an enemy. And that the same cut and colour of face, which had been found useful in keeping flies and foes at a distance, should be thought honourable, and become fashionable, will not appear strange to those, who know the power of habit in forming associations.

The Romans, when they had attained the age of manhood, were much employed in the exercises of the field. Their summer was very hot, and, unless when in arms, they seldom wore any covering on the head. Hence we may imagine, that at Rome the complexion of the one sex would differ exceedingly from that of the other; as the women were subject to a strict economy, and did not often appear in publick. Accordingly, Cicero declares, that masculine grace or dignity consists in that sort of complexion which betokens habitual exercise; and which in that climate we may suppose to have been a dark brown approaching to the mulatto colour. A fairer hue would no doubt have been offensive to that manly people; as intimating effeminacy, and idleness. Yet, in regard to beauty of complexion in women, the Roman notions did not differ from ours. This might be proved from many passages in the antient authors, particularly from Virgil's charming picture of the blushing Lavinia; whom he compares to pure ivory tinged with purple, and to white lillies glowing with a ruddy light reflected from roses\*.—Where customs are uniform, men will differ but little in their sentiments concerning beauty; because the same appearances of the human body will suggest nearly the same ideas.

\* Cicero de off. lib. i. § 36. Virg. Æneid. xii. 67.

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SECONDLY;

SECONDLY; Perfection and Skill are always agreeable; and whatever suggests them to the mind must be so too; and, if visible, is entitled to be called Beautiful or Elegant. I know not, whether it is not for this reason, that FIGURES so compleat as circles, squares, ellipses, equilateral triangles, hexagons, &c. impress us with the notion of beauty. Certain it is, that the more accurately they are drawn, the more beautiful they appear.

Were we to consider any two of such figures, a square, for example, and a circle, or a cube and a globe, simply as they are in themselves, and without regard to their colour, substance, or use, we might be at a loss to determine, which of the two excelled in beauty. But when we see them in furniture, or in architecture, that matter will be decided according to the ideas of wisdom or folly, of convenience or inconvenience, which they convey to the mind. Make a sphere the base, and a cube the upper end, of a pillar; and we are offended with the impropriety: for such a column cannot stand, and the designer must have been a fool. Reverse the position of the figures; and make the cube a pedestal, and put the sphere on the top; and, if the other parts be in due proportion, we acknowledge the whole to be beautiful, because it is convenient, and does some honour to the architect. Even a preposterous combination, like what is here supposed, will please, when it is contrived so as to convey, in the way of allegory, a good moral meaning. Fortune, represented as a female standing on a sphere, is an expressive emblem to denote mutability; and this we allow to be an elegant invention in Cebes, who I think is the first author that speaks of it.

Beauty of form is said to depend in part on variety and proportion. An equilateral triangle is more beautiful, because more regular, than a figure of three unequal sides: and a hexagon than a pentagon; because it has more variety; and because the



proportion of the angles and bounding lines is more immediately discernible in the former, than in the latter. But variety, without proportion, or some other quality connected with agreeable ideas, it not beautiful; for what beauty can there be in a figure of twenty unequal sides? And what is it, that renders Proportion beautiful, but the pleasing ideas of skill, contrivance, and convenience, which it conveys to the mind of the beholder?

This proportion in things visible, which is estimated by the eye only, and cannot be ascertained by measure or calculation, is not easily defined in words. It implies *convenience*; for no proportion is good, that makes a thing inconvenient. It implies *good contrivance*; for what is ill-proportioned can hardly be said to be *well-contrived*. And it implies such a coincidence, of the part to which it belongs, with the intended effect of the whole, as not to hurt the general design: for, in an elegant work, as the front of a building, no part or member will be allowed to be in exact proportion, which withdraws our attention from the whole, or which we cannot contemplate without overlooking the rest of the piece. This last character, of the component members of any beautiful system, is commonly called harmony, *symmetry*, or a right adjustment of parts. Now *symmetry*, *good contrivance*, and *convenience*, are all pleasing; and therefore, that which comprehends them all must be pleasing; and, consequently, if an object of sight, beautiful. Disproportion, and too much ornament, convey the idea of inconvenience and bad taste; and are, therefore, not beautiful, because to a considerate mind disagreeable.

In beautiful things, Utility is essential: for all beauty gives pleasure; and that cannot please, which is plainly useless, or repugnant to use. With perfect beauty of form, and of colour, the greatest utility is often united, in the works of nature. In them too, it has been remarked by an elegant writer, that what we con-

sider as strikingly beautiful is for the most part smooth in the surface, and rather below the ordinary size, than above it. A craggy mountain is a sublime object, and its crags may add to its sublimity; but a beautiful hill is, or appears to be, smooth. The statue of Minerva must be tall, dignity being her character; but a gigantick Venus would be absurd; that of Medici is little more than five feet.\*

Now, whence comes it, that smoothness, and moderate smallness, should enter into our idea of beauty? Is it not, because the effect of beauty is, to compose, as that of sublimity is, to elevate the soul; and because what is smooth, and what is not large, conveys a notion of ease, and manageableness, and softness, which tend as effectually to settle the mind, as the idea of vastness and difficulty tends to rouse it?

Besides, moderate size, and an even surface, are favourable to simplicity; which is soothing to our nature, because it promotes an easy and perfect comprehension of things. We are pleased, when we readily and thoroughly understand; for this makes us think well of our own faculties; but to be perplexed and puzzled, is tiresome, and mortifying. In elegance of almost every sort, of manners, of language, of music, of architecture, of attitude, and of drapery,

\* In the following passage,

Talia jactabam, et furiata mente ferebar;  
 Cum mihi se, non ante oculis tam clara, videndam  
 Obtulit, et pura per noctem in luce refulsit,  
 Alma Parens, confessa Deam, qualisque videri  
 Cælicolis, et QUANTA solet — *Æneid. ii. 588.*

*Æneas*, or *Virgil* insinuates, that *Venus*, when she condescended to become visible to mortals, assumed a smaller form, than when she appeared among the Gods. And for this there was good reason. Her ethereal kindred were much mightier, and consequently taller, than her friends in the lower world; and a *Venus*, adapted to the terrestrial taste, would have been thought too diminutive by the lofty inhabitants of *Olympus*.

Simplicity

Simplicity is indispenfable \*. It is perhaps of all graces the moft difficult to acquire by art, (for fome have it from nature); and it is that, which to an uncorrupted tafte yields the moft durable fatisfaction. In feminine attire, *neat fimplicity* is juftly confidered by Horace †, as a moft captivating circumftance:

Of beautiful animals, and of the moft beautiful parts of animals, the figure is generally bounded by curves, rather than by ftraight lines; except where thefe laft may be neceffary to ftrength or convenience. Were the human body, or were the breaft and back of a horfe, a dove, or any other well-shaped animal, to terminate on all fides in right lines and angles, inftead of that flowing curve which winds fo gracefully around them, every one muft be fenfible, that the beauty of fhape would be entirely deftroyed. The peculiar curvature of this winding line is not eafily defcribed in words. Hogarth, in the figures that illuftrate his *Analysis of Beauty*, has made it obvious to the eye, by many ingenious contrivances.

Suppofe a feries of curves;—the firft bent like the letter S in the Roman printed character, or like two femicircles of the fame radius running into one another with oppofite convexities;—to proceed gradually, with a lefs and lefs degree of flexure, till the curve almoft difappear in a right line:—it feems to be in the middle between the firft and this laft, that the waving line I fpeak of is to be found:

Now I am inclined to think, that, on the principles here adopted, a good reafon may be given for our preferring this curve in animals, and efpecially in the human frame; and, confequently, for our being pleafed with it in fuch other things, as may affume it without inconvenience. It is the medium, between a defect and an excefs; between too much plumpnefs and too little; between

\* Effay on Poetry and Mufick. Part i. chap. 6. feft. 2. § 4.

† Od. i. 5.

that luxuriance of substance, which conveys the idea of unwieldiness or weakness, and that scantiness which is generally known to accompany decay. In infants, these curves are too much bent, on account of the redundancy of flesh compared with the smallness of the size; in old-age, they are bent too little, and approach to right lines, on account of the defect of moisture; in the prime of life, they are neither the one nor the other, but a middle between both.—This shape, therefore, is by custom associated in our minds with the idea of that period, when the bodily powers are most complete, and equally remote from infirmity on the one hand, and imperfection on the other. Surely it is not wonderful, that a form, which conveys the notion of youth, and consequently of joy and hope, of health, strength, and activity, and of generous and warm affections, should please more, and for that reason be accounted more beautiful, than those other forms, that convey ideas of insufficiency, and feebleness, or of decay, despondence, and melancholy.

I mean not to insinuate, that the body of an infant, and that of an old man, are *equally* remote from the standard of perfect beauty. Infancy has its peculiar charms; and every feeling heart knows them to be irresistible. Innocence, helplessness, playfulness, freshness of constitution and of colour, with the consideration that it is advancing to maturity, all conspire to recommend infancy to our love, by suggesting a thousand delightful ideas:—whereas a human body, emaciated with age, can boast of none of those charms; and, instead of complacency and hope, calls forth the painful passions of regret and sorrow.

But let me correct myself. This is an idea of decrepitude, rather than of old age. The last period of life, like the evening sky, is often distinguished by a lustre, not dazzling indeed, nor ardent, like the splendour of noon, but no less pleasing to a contemplative mind.

mind. A fresh old age, with chearfulness, good sense, and a good conscience, though it cannot be called the loveliest, is however the most venerable, of all terrestrial things.

The curve of beauty is not in every case beautiful. Nothing indeed is so, that necessarily brings disagreeable thoughts. If the horse were as slow as the snail, we should be less inclined to admire his shape, than to nauseate his unwieldy magnitude. If pillars twisted into this winding form were so slender as to raise a suspicion of weakness, their fine outlines would not prevent our disapprobation. — Hogarth's admiration of this curve seems to have been excessive. He takes every opportunity to introduce it: and hence it has been remarked of his pictures, that they want that firmness and stability, which is produced by right lines, and which, when necessary or convenient, is always to be seen in the works of nature.

Few appearances in the animal world are more pleasing, than a horse of high mettle running at full speed, his mane and tail streaming in the wind, with none of those trappings that betoken servitude, and not disfigured by the prunings of barbarous art: we admire the shape and the motion; we sympathise (if I may so speak) with the animal's consciousness of freedom and independence; and, if we have any thing of a painter's eye, we are struck with the waving lines that predominate so remarkably in his figure. All this we call beautiful, because we are pleased with it: and it pleases, chiefly because it intimates many agreeable considerations of youth, strength, swiftness, and other qualities, which are valuable in themselves, and particularly useful in this noble creature. What we call beauty in a cow, is a different thing. That sort of beast, if shaped like a horse, would not please; first, because it would appear unnatural, which is an offensive idea; and, secondly, because it would give us no reason

to expect those good qualities, for which a cow is valued. In different species of visible things, therefore, beauty is not the same. But, in every species, that form will be accounted beautiful, which raises in the beholder ideas of perfection, usefulness, and other endearing qualities.

May not, then, our approbation and our disapprobation, of particular animal shapes and figures, be accounted for, upon this principle; that, by long habit, we have learned, that some are connected with agreeable, and others with disagreeable circumstances? Previously to some knowledge of the nature of any animal, or some conjectures in regard to it, we should not probably determine any thing concerning the beauty of its *figure*. \*

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\* A great artist and excellent writer accounts for the pleasure we take in beautiful *forms* or *figures*, upon this principle, that our minds are more accustomed to them than to any other. His theory is as follows. "We could not perceive the beauty of any animal till we were acquainted with several animals of the same kind. Had we never seen more than one human face, we should not have been in a condition to say, whether in respect of the *shape* of the features it were beautiful or otherwise: and the more we are accustomed to view a variety of forms of any particular sort, horses, statues, houses, &c. the better judges we become of that sort of beauty. Now, says our Author, Beauty is that, which nature seems always to intend, and which is actually produced oftener than any *one form* of ugliness. A straight nose, for example, is more frequently seen, than any one curvature of that part; and more frequently occurs to our fancy, because every deviation from it puts us in mind of it. That shape, therefore, of the nose we account the most beautiful; or, in other words, that shape gives us the greatest pleasure, because it is most familiar to our eyes and imagination." See the eighty-second paper of *The Idler*.

This ingenious theory is not inconsistent with mine, though it resolves the philosophy of *beauty in form or shape* into a simpler and more general principle. It is, no doubt, natural for us to contract a liking to what we have been accustomed to, even when in itself indifferent. Many of the brutes do so. An apartment in which I had lived without uneasiness for a few weeks, I could never leave without some degree of concern. That for this reason merely, and independently on agreeable associations, we should prefer those forms that are most familiar to the mind,

In the article of dress, our notions of beauty, as elsewhere observed, depend much upon custom. What is most fashionable appears to common eyes most beautiful\*. But are there no fixed principles of beauty in dress? Are not the Greek and the Roman draperies allowed to be more graceful than our modern French garb?

They are so. For they abound more in the flowing curve above-mentioned: and for this reason, and because they are more simple and manageable than our attire, they comply more easily with the natural bendings and outlines of, the finest animal form we know, the human body; and of course show it to greater advantage. Our dresses disguise, and often disfigure, the body; confound the proportion which one part bears to another; and present to the eye a multitude of sharp angles and right lines, such as we know are not to be seen in any elegant animal figure. We are however reconciled to them on ordinary occasions: but in statues they appear ridiculous; and therefore a good statue must be either naked, or dressed in the Greek or Roman, or some other graceful fashion †. The same thing holds true of those painted portraits, in which permanent elegance is more studied than exact likeness.—We are sure, that the figure of the human body will always please, on account of the many agreeable thoughts it must ever present to the human mind. Those dresses that disguise it least will, therefore, have a chance to be most frequently, and longest, in fashion; and must, by consequence,

mind, I see no reason to deny. Thus far I acquiesce in the author's theory. And I presume it will be granted, in favour of mine, that a slight liking thus contracted at first would by subsequent associations of a pleasing nature be improved into a stronger attachment, and so bestow additional charms on the captivating form.

\* See the preceding Section.

† Essay on Poetry and Music. Part i. chap. 3.

in statues, and other imitations, that are intended for the publick eye, and to last many years, be preferable to such forms of attire as are likely to have only a transient vogue, and to derive that more from custom and prejudice, than from any intrinsic excellence, or natural propriety.

As far as the beauty of attire depends upon its suitableness to persons and characters, the custom of the country must pass for the standard. Different dresses belong to different sexes, ranks, and professions. In all countries, where variety of dress was attainable, this notion has ever prevailed. A man in a woman's garb is an uncouth figure: clergymen and soldiers are known by the cut, as well as by the colour, of their cloaths: and the same apparel, which is becoming in a country maid, would be unseemly in a lady of rank appearing in her own character. In all these matters, we are offended, when the common rules are not observed.

And for this there is good reason. He who endeavours to introduce a change in the garb that custom has appropriated to his profession, sex, and age, must have his mind very much set upon trifles; and think, either that he is wiser than other men, or that his eminence entitles him to distinguish himself in this way. Alterations in the fashion of dress must indeed happen, as the world is now constituted; but that man is a fop, who would wish them to happen by his means. Nay, he is worse than a fop, if, by attempting an unnecessary change, he give offence to those whom it is his duty to please; and so make himself less useful in society than he ought to be. I wish this hint may be of use to some young clergymen whom I have heard of.

THIRDLY. Beauty of GESTURE is not confined to any one state of the body. The erectness of the Apollo Belvidere; the leaning attitude of the Antinous; and the bending, shrinking form



form of the Venus of Medici, are all very beautiful. The first conveys the ideas of majesty, activity, and strength; the second of composure, acquiescence, and ease; and the third, of conscious beauty united with modesty. It is our knowledge of the influence of human thoughts upon the human body, that enables us to discern these meanings in those attitudes: and as all these ideas are extremely pleasing, the statues that suggest them must be equally so. To which I may add, that, in these figures, perfect beauty of form is united with gracefulness of attitude; and the one heightens the other: we admire the shape on account of the attitude, and the attitude on account of the shape; and both the one and the other we admire on account of those delightful ideas, with which they are associated in our imagination. Besides, each of the attitudes in question is natural, and such as a well-formed human body may continue in, without pain, for a considerable time.

For it may in general be remarked, that no human gesture can be beautiful, which conveys any disagreeable idea of infirmity, unwieldiness, restraint, or affectation. Many of those steps in the minuet, and other dances, which one cannot at first perform without some danger of falling, seem to me rather to surprise, because they are difficult, than to please, because they are graceful. Figures finically contrasted, in which the eyes seem to point one way, and the rest of the body another, and the left leg is an exact counterpart to the right arm, and the left arm to the right leg, and the very fingers appear to be at variance each with its neighbour, are too artificial, and have too much the air of restraint, to please those who love nature and simplicity. They were however much affected by the French painters of the last age: but we do not find this affectation in the pictures of Reynolds; and in his Discourses he has particularly cautioned the student against it.

Nor can that be a beautiful attitude, which is incongruous to the action, or sentiment, by which it is supposed to be produced. A human figure, leaning against a pillar, and yet perfectly upright, would not please; because we know that such a thing cannot be, without constraint and pain. Archers stooping, while they draw the bow to shoot their arrows to a great distance, would suggest the idea of infirmity, or want of skill; but, if they were taking a near aim, that posture would not be unseemly. An erect carriage of the body is often convenient, and generally profitable to health; but is graceful only when it is suited to the emotion that is supposed to be in the mind. It becomes a soldier in arms, because it accompanies, and betokens, elevation of mind; it becomes a person, whose rank and abilities entitle him to have a sense of his own dignity; it becomes any man, or any woman, who is provoked to exert a laudable indignation; and it is becoming in those motions and dances, that are intended to show the human stature and shape to advantage; but, as the concomitant of modesty, humility, respect, intreaty, compassion, or sorrow, or even of indolence, composure, or the desire of rest after fatigue, it would be offensive, because unnatural.

I distinguish here between Expression and Beauty. Constrained, and even painful attitudes, may be very expressive; and as such are approved of: but, though we call them well-imagined, well-executed, and natural, we cannot in strict language call them beautiful. Such are those of Laocoon and his sons, struggling with serpents, and with the pangs of death. Such is that of the wounded gladiator; which so emphatically marks the last effort of nature, and the last moment of life. And such is the posture of the slave, who is supposed to listen to the secret talk of conspirators: he cannot continue in it without pain; and yet the eagerness

eagerness of his attention, and the fear of losing one single whisper, or of being overheard, will not permit him to change it.

FOURTHLY: Beauty and Awkwardness of MOTION are not easily described in words: but will, I believe, be found, the one to please; the other to displease, on account chiefly of certain agreeable ideas suggested by the former, and of certain disagreeable ones associated with the latter.

Motions, that imply ease, with such an arrangement and proportion of parts in the moving object, as give reason to think, they may continue for some time without injury to it, are generally pleasing; at least in animals; especially when they betoken a sort of perfection suited to the nature of the animal. But motions, that betray infirmity, unwieldiness, imperfection, or the appearance of danger, cannot be called beautiful, because they convey unpleasing ideas. A strong and slender young man in the race, or a high-mettled horse or greyhound at full speed, presents an image of the former kind: and the jumping and capering of an ox or cow; the flouncing of a large fish thrown on the land; the waddling steps of an infant that alarms us every moment with the fear of its falling, and the walk of a man crippled by labour, gout, or old-age, or rendered sluggish by corpulency, are examples of the latter.

I think it is Rousseau, who observes, that, in running, a woman has nothing of that grace, which attends her on other occasions. Perhaps the jutting out of her elbows, the natural effect of her endeavouring with lifted hands to secure the most delicate part of the female frame, may give to her motion the appearance of timidity and constraint. Or perhaps she may seem to fail in this exercise, merely because, according to our manners, she cannot be much accustomed to it. Ovid says, that Daphne's beauty was heightened by her running; but he accounts for it, without any contradiction.

to this philosophy \*. Virgil, in celebrating the speed of Camilla, says not a word of the gracefulness of her motion. †

The former poet affirms, in his Art of Love ‡, that Venus was still graceful, even when, for the amusement of a friend, she used to *take off* the limping gait of poor old Vulcan. Perhaps it might be so. Such mimickry in so lovely a lady would convey an idea, not of infirmity, but of playfulness. Yet in mere mortal beauties I apprehend that mimickry is not very becoming; because there is something vulgar in it. For no power of outward charms will reconcile a discerning eye to any motion, or any sort of behaviour, though known to be assumed, which betrays indelicacy, or want of taste. So that, without sense and virtue, even a beautiful woman, who aspires to general admiration, has a very difficult part to act. But where these are united in an elegant form, we say, with the poet,

Illam, quicquid agit, quoquo vestigia flectit,  
Componit furtim, subsequiturque decor. ||

which, though not easily translated, may be thus paraphrased:  
“ Wherever she moves, Grace attends her; whatever she does,  
“ Grace, without the appearance of art or design, adjusts her form,  
“ and regulates all her motions.”

The heaving of unbroken waves in the sea is beautiful; perhaps on account of their smoothness, uniformity, and easy curvature, suggesting the idea of vast agitation without difficulty; which for many obvious reasons must be more agreeable, than a sluggish or weak exertion with turbulence. A ship's progress through a swelling, but not tempestuous ocean, is also extremely beautiful: for it fills the mind with many pleasing images; the boldness, the skill, and the security of the mariner; the perfection of that mechanism, which is not endangered by so mighty an effort; and the

\* Metam. i. 527.

† Æneid. vii. 810.

‡ Lib. ii. 570.

|| Tibullus. Eleg. iv. 7.

advantages of navigation and commerce. And in both cases, the sublimity conspires with the beauty of the objects to heighten the pleasure of the beholder. The enraged Atlantick, rising in mountains, is sublime in the highest degree, and would yield a pleasing astonishment to one who could see it without fear \*; but conveys too many ideas of danger and difficulty, to produce that soothing and chearful delight, which attends the contemplation of what is beautiful.

A flag or streamer hanging without motion, being emblematical of inactivity, is not beautiful; except so far as it may please by the glare of the colours, or by suggesting the idea of calmness and rest. But flags and streamers, flying in the wind, gratify the eye by the varying shades of colour, and by their easy volubility; and affect the imagination with many agreeable ideas of busy life, and military splendor. Dryden has expressed this with a pleasing and picturesque extravagance.

The flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,  
 And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire:  
 The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,  
 Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire. †

He seems to have been fond of the image; for, in another place, describing a banner, in which the god of war was painted, he says, with his wonted energy,

Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,  
 And all the Godhead seem'd to glow with fire;  
 Even the ground glitter'd where the streamer flew,  
 And the green grass was died with sanguine hue. ‡

It is not easy to determine, whether the sublime or the beautiful, predominates in this passage.

\* See Illustrations on Sublimity.

† Annus Mirabilis.

‡ Knight's Tale.

The plodding pace of a plowman is awkward: for it leads us to think of bodily powers impaired by toil, or not exercised to advantage; of manners uncultivated; and of other evils attending, or supposed to attend, a life of labour and penury. But the plowman himself is not sensible of any thing ungraceful in his walk; because all his friends and neighbours have it, and he knows of none better. In fact we see, that peasants imitate one another in this respect; and that the young and the nimble assume of choice those motions, which are naturally expressive of age, infirmity, and weariness.

But far more unseemly are the strut of the solemn, and the wriggle of the pert, coxcomb: whose every motion shows vanity and affectation, with a nauseous degree of self-attention and self-sufficiency.

Cicero, in name of the Stoicks (with whom Grace or Dignity consisted in a perfect sameness of look and of gesture on all occasions) blames every motion, that alters the countenance, quickens the breath, or betrays any discomposure\*. But I believe the most eager motion would appear graceful, if it were understood to express a good affection: as that of a child, after long absence, springing to the embrace of a parent. Nothing will offend the eye, which either warms the heart with pleasing passions, or conveys agreeable images to the fancy.

That air, and these motions, which in common life we call graceful, comprehend many particulars, every one of which will on examination be found, to be associated with, and to convey, agreeable ideas of moral, intellectual, or corporeal excellence. A graceful air implies presence of mind, and a perfect command of the body; with a gentle, chearful, and free demeanour, neither encumbered by timidity, nor fluttering into petulance; but pre-

\* Cicero de Off. lib. i. § 36.

serving,

erving, between what is rude and what is finical, between pride and abjectness, between modesty and assurance, that due medium which betokens mildness, generosity, and spirit, a kind attention to others, and a forgetfulness of one's self; with such other points of decorum, as put us in mind of the pleasing ideas connected with elegant conversation, and polite manners. And all this must appear unstudied and habitual; that it may not convey any disagreeable notion of constraint or hypocrisy. What is taught in schools of exercise is chiefly intended to correct, or to prevent, evil habits, and to give one the command of one's body; but must no more be practised on the ordinary occasions of life, than the formal style of declamation is to be introduced into familiar dialogue.

It is probable, that the antient Greeks and Romans excelled us in elegance of motion and attitude. For their bodies were kept active by continual exercise, and were not clogged, as we are, with cumbersome apparel: and, besides, they were taught (at least the men were) to sit, to stand, to walk, and to run gracefully. Yet Cicero complains, and we too have cause to complain, that many of the motions practised in the theatre, and by the masters of exercise, are offensive, because too remote from nature and simplicity, and unbecoming the decorum of the manly character. \*

In the days of heroism and fable, goddesses were known by their air, and especially by their motion. Juno piqued herself on her august demeanour.

Ast ego, quæ Divum INCEDO regina—Jovisque  
Et foror, et conjux—

But I, who move in majesty on high,  
Consort of Jove, and Empress of the sky—

One sees the lofty air, and the stately step, with which the proud queen of Olympus pronounced these words. Venus, though not

\* Cicero de Off. lib. i. 36.

so majestic a personage, had however a certain natural walk, which she could not fall into, without discovering her rank. When she put off the assumed character of the Tyrian huntress, it was not the act of turning away, and disclosing the bloom of a rosy neck; nor the divine odour breathed from her hair; nor her robe flowing down to the ground, that made her known even to her own son; but when he saw her in motion, then

— Vera INCESSU patuit Dea.

The Goddess by her graceful walk is known.

This may show, how highly an elegant air in walking was esteemed by the ancients. Indeed it is hardly possible for the most ordinary beholder to see it without emotion. He who cannot discern a mind in it, must however derive pleasure from the harmony of bodily parts, and from the ease and freedom, the energy and composure, with which they exert themselves.

Dancing is connected with so many delightful ideas, of youth, health, activity, cheerfulness, and beauty, that the motions commonly practised in it cannot fail to please, unless accompanied with some peculiarity that conveys a disagreeable suggestion of deformity, want of skill, affectation, impudence, or any other incongruity. But I need not remark, because it is obvious, that the motions of different dancers differ exceedingly in respect of grace. Much will depend on the comeliness, good shape, and agility of the person; on the ease wherewith the several movements and evolutions are performed, and on their perfect coincidence with the expression and rhythm of the music, and with the rules of the dance.

That all dances are not equally graceful, is no less obvious. Those that show to advantage the motion, shape, and activity of the human body, are always approved of. But some steps, as already observed, particularly in the hornpipe and minuet, seem to  
 derive



derive a charm rather from their difficulty, than from their elegance. The latter dance, if I can trust my own judgment, is not so graceful in men, as in women; whose full and flowing attire not only gives dignity to their mien, and an easy winding curvature to their motion, but also conceals the inconvenient, and (I had almost said) distorted position of the feet.

Lest I should get beyond my depth (being no great connoisseur in this elegant art) I shall only observe further, that some dances please, by uniting regularity with apparent disorder; which yields the gratification of surprise, and conveys a favourable idea of the skill, with which they are planned and conducted. Some pieces of musick are contrived with a like purpose, and please from the same principle: as Fugues, in which different voices or instruments take up the same air, but not all at the same time; so that one is, as it were, the echo, or an imitation, of another. And yet the general result is, not dissonance or confusion, which one would be apt to expect, but perfect harmony. This gives an agreeable surprise; and heightens our admiration of the composer's skill, and of the dexterity of the performers.

I know not, whether any other poet has in so few words conveyed so many charming ideas of Beauty, in its several varieties of *colour*, *shape*, *attitude*, and *motion*, as Gray has combined in the following image.

Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare;  
 Where'er she turns the Graces *homage* pay:  
 With *arms sublime* that float upon the air,  
 In *gliding state* she wins her *easy way*;  
 O'er her *warm cheek*, and *rising bosom*, move  
 The *bloom of young desire*, and *purple light of love*.

As the human voice is that sound, which more directly than any other makes its way, through the ear, to the heart of man; so that, which to his eye displays the greatest variety of beauty in the narrowest compass, is the human countenance. So strong is our predilection for this masterpiece of nature, that, if the highest created being were to present himself to our view, we cannot but think he would bear a resemblance to "the human face divine." And hence we approve of those fictions in painting and poetry, that describe angels and personified virtues in the form of beautiful men and women.

I do not say, that the pleasure we take in beholding this wonderful assemblage of visible charms is *altogether* the effect of associations, founded in experience, and established by habit. But that it may be *partly* accounted for, from this cause, I have no scruple to affirm.

It will, I think, be allowed, that regular features, illuminated by fine colours, would not be very beautiful, if they were void of expression, nor beautiful at all, if they had a bad expression. Or, if such a face could be supposed capable of gaining admirers, it must only be among those (and many such, indeed, there are) who, not having sagacity to read the soul in the countenance, are no competent judges of human beauty. On the other hand, homely features that express good understanding, and a kind, a gentle, and a chearful temper, are never disagreeable to those who can discern their meaning, but may on the contrary be very agreeable, or even truly amiable.

Now, previously to experience, we should not know, what looks are significant of good, or what of bad mental qualities; nor, consequently, would the former convey to us any pleasing, or the latter any unpleasing ideas. Nay, previous to experience, we should not know, what colour of face accompanies health and youth, or what  
betokens

betokens the contrary; nor, of course, could we have any reason for preferring any one complexion to any other. But having learned, that certain forms, and colours, of features do commonly intimate certain agreeable qualities of mind and body; they become as closely associated in our imagination or memory, as the words of a known language are with the thoughts they stand for; so that the outward sign is no sooner perceived, than the idea signified presents itself.

In proof of this reasoning, it might be remarked, that persons, who, from want of years, or of natural sagacity, are not quick-sighted in what relates to the mind, are most liable to be captivated by regular features, and a glowing complexion; while more experienced or more penetrating observers are not thoroughly pleased, unless where they discern those nicer, and more significant graces, that seem to betoken intellectual accomplishments, and moral virtues.

The most striking feature of the face, and that to which we most frequently direct our view, is the eye. This, with the eyelids, the eyelashes, and the eyebrow, is the chief seat of expression. At this window (as the wise man calls it) the soul is often seen in her genuine character, even when the porter below (I mean the tongue) is endeavouring to persuade us, that she is not within, that she is otherwise employed, or that she is quite a different person. Smiles and sadness display themselves partly at the mouth; the former by raising, the latter by depressing, the corners of it; and yet we might in many cases mistake a laughing for a weeping countenance, if we did not see the eye. Indeed this little organ, whether sparkling with joy, or melting in sorrow; whether gleaming with indignation, or languishing in tenderness; whether glowing with the steady light of deliberate valour, or sending forth emanations of goodwill and gratitude, is one of the most interesting

objects in the whole visible universe. There is more in it, than shape, motion, and colour; there is thought and passion; there is life and soul; there is reason and speech.—Now, what is it, that constitutes the beauty of this feature? And why are we more pleased with some appearances of it, than with others?

Venus says, in Shakspeare,

Mine eyes are gray, and bright, and quick in turning: \*

that is, are of a dark colour, of a fine water, (to take an allusion from diamonds) and of a diversified expression.

A dark-coloured iris may perhaps be *naturally* more pleasing, than a fainter one; because it forms a more striking contrast with the whiteness of the ball, and occasions a more brilliant reflexion of the light: and bright colours are, as I remarked already, preferred even by children to such as are obscure. And the motions, and consequently the expression, of a blue or a hazel eye, are discernible more immediately, more accurately, and at a greater distance, than those of light-coloured eyes. Thus far I may allow the beauty of this organ to be intrinsic and absolute; and not to depend on associated ideas of moral, intellectual, or bodily excellence.

But an eye may be dark-coloured, and yet not beautiful. If in its motion there be such languor, unsteadiness, or uniformity, as we know by experience to accompany a listless temper, a wandering or bewildered attention, or an unvaried sameness or a want of thought, it will suggest unpleasing ideas, and rather dissatisfy, than interest us. Dark eyes, that seem to imply mental deficiency, are even more disagreeable, because more observable, than such as with the same expression have a fainter colour.

An eye, that is bright, or of a fine water, is generally beautiful, if there be nothing offensive in the expression. For it conveys the

\* Shakspeare's Venus and Adonis.

agreeable ideas of perfection, health, and soundness. And as lively thoughts and passions are observed to give brilliancy to this organ; so that brilliancy, wherever it appears, is apt to raise in the beholder ideas of vivacity, acuteness, cheerfulness, generosity, and other pleasing qualities. No wonder then, that it should be accounted beautiful.

That “ quickness in turning,” which the poet justly imagines to be essential to fine eyes, betokens in the mind a capacity of passing readily from one thought to another; an agreeable talent, when accompanied with good sense; and just the reverse of dullness, inattention, and stupidity. The fixed and unvaried glare of an inexpressive eye is frightful. It puts one in mind of death, and is such a look as we should expect in a ghost. So our great poet understands it:

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
Which thou dost glare with —

says Macbeth to the murdered Banquo. So Spenser, in a passage equal to any thing that ever was written in descriptive poetry:

On every side them stood  
The trembling ghosts, with sad amazed mood,  
Chattering their iron teeth, and staring wide  
With stony eyes. \*

In fact, the beauty of the eye depends chiefly upon its expression. If it convey a favourable idea of the mind that gives it animation, we must be pleased with it in the same proportion, in which we approve the good qualities that seem to be expressed by it. And as eyes may intimate good mental qualities, whatever be their colour, so eyes of any colour, at least of any common colour, may be

\* Fairy Queen. Book i. canto 5. stanza 32.

beautiful. The expression of such as are dark-coloured is no doubt keener, and more emphatical, than that of others; but *an agreeable expression* is not confined to any colour, nor excluded from any. And the same thing is true of a disagreeable expression. Eyes of the clearest water, and best colour, will be viewed with dislike, if they be thought to speak the language of envy, pride, suspicion, cruelty, or folly.

The beauty of the other features may be accounted for in the same way. White and red are, no doubt, beautiful in themselves; and marvellous is the delicacy, with which they are blended in a blooming countenance. But, although, without such a composition of white and red, human beauty, according to our notions of it, cannot be perfect; yet the pleasure we take in a fine complexion arises chiefly (as already observed) from the ideas of youth, health, modesty, and gentleness, which are its natural associates. If it were to suggest to us (as it probably does to a grown up negro, when he first sees it) the idea of imperfection or disease, or of any thing unnatural in the human frame, we should turn away from it in disgust.

Of the features considered abstractedly, and without regard to the complexion, it may be remarked in general, that what we call *regularity* is accounted beautiful. But why is it so? Is it not, because it betokens an even temper, and the absence of those passions whereby the features are made irregular; and because that proportion, which we most approve in the several parts of the face, is found to be the most convenient, and consequently the most perfect? Every evil passion mars in a greater or less degree the regularity of the features: and if a very large nose were more useful than one of a moderate size, we should certainly prefer the former. A feature greatly raised above, or diminished below, its due proportion; that is, above or below that proportion, which is most  
common,

common, and known to be most convenient, displeases, by suggesting painful ideas of excess, or deficiency, disease, or imperfection.

A smiling countenance is a lovelier object, than one agitated with laughter; partly, no doubt, because the former is less disfigured, and the latter cannot continue long without pain; but chiefly, because the one displays the virtues of good-humour and serenity; whereas the other is at best only the sign of merriment, which is no virtue at all, and may happen occasionally to the peevish and passionate, as well as to the goodnatured and chearful. Some of our English poets call Venus the *laughter-loving dame*; but Homer with better judgment calls her "the lady who delights in " smiles."\*

Every turn of countenance it is pleasing to behold, which betokens good mental qualities. But had the laws of nature relating to the human physiognomy been the contrary of what they are, I am inclined to think, that our ideas of beauty would have been so too.

I shall conclude this subject with two observations.—The first is, that human beauty is so far from being (what it is said in the Scotch proverb to be) only *Skin-deep*, that it derives its origin, and most essential characters, from the soul. Most people, therefore, may in some degree acquire it, who are willing to cultivate their intellectual powers, and to cherish good affections. And without a sound understanding, and a chearful, benevolent, and gentle disposition, no fineness of shape, delicacy of complexion, or regularity of feature, will ever form that genuine beauty, which at once pleases a discerning eye, and captivates and secures an intelligent mind. What ideas do we affix to the terms, a pretty idiot, or a handsome termagant? Surely they are not agreeable, but very much

\* See an Essay on Laughter. Introduction.

the contrary. "Beauty," according to Plutarch, "is the flower and blossom of virtue." It is outwardly ornamental; because it is the effect of a generous nature operating within.

I remark, in the second place, that it is not so indeterminate a thing as many modern philosophers imagine. Men may differ in their notions of beauty, as the object of *love*, or of *liking*; and certainly will do so, as long as they differ in their customs, prejudices, passions, and capacities. Yet a standard of beauty there is, notwithstanding. Else why should those very statues be admired as beautiful by us, which were the admiration of the antients? And why should those ideas of beauty, which Homer, Virgil, and Ovid describe with so much rapture, be so exactly conformable to our ideas? Andromache smiling in tears \* would be as interesting an object now, as she was three thousand years ago: and the Venus, and the Lavinia, of the Mantuan poet †, if copied by Reynolds, would still be the perfection of feminine grace, and feminine tenderness.

That this may be the more apparent, let us distinguish between that sort of beauty, which is adapted to the general taste; and those forms of it, which gratify the various humours and fancies of individuals.

Individual men and women frequently contract likings in this way, at which their acquaintance wonder: but nobody wonders, that the Apollo Belvidere, the Antinous, and the Venus of Medici, should be regarded with admiration. Just so, one may prefer the village where one was born to every other; and yet be sensible, that in real beauty it falls short of a thousand others. The taste may appear singular to those who know not the cause of the preference: but in being charmed with the

\* Δακρυοειν γιλασασα, Hom. Il. vi. 484.

† Virg. Æneid. i. 402. xii. 64.



scenery of Richmond or Shooters-hill, of Canewood or Taymouth; of Loch-lomond or the lakes of Keswick, there is nothing singular or surprising at all.

Des Cartes records his partiality for squinting persons, and has very well accounted for it \*. And most other examples of a *particular* taste in features, complexion, and shape, may be explained from similar principles. If in other respects we be greatly pleased with any person, such of his, or of her peculiarities, as would appear indifferent, or even ungainly, to others, may become lovely in our eyes, on account of the many agreeable ideas with which in our imagination they may be associated. For some such reason I suppose it was, that Anacreon spoke favourably of joined eyebrows; a circumstance, which has puzzled the critics; who forgetting that this poet was a man, and considering him only as an author, seem to have thought that he would not avow any partialities of his own, which were not warranted by the general taste of his age. It is no doubt owing to the power of similar associations, that some men prefer a tall, and some a shorter size; some, a plump, and some, a slender make; some a high, and some a low forehead; some one colour of hair, or of eyes, and some another. And it is but too common for one's taste to change in these and the like particulars; according as one's affection happens to shift from one to another object.

That which I understand by beauty adapted *to the general taste*, is to be distinguished from those forms that gratify these, and the like, particular fancies or partialities. There may indeed be a coincidence; as when one is enamoured of a person, whom all the world allow to be beautiful: but often they

\* See above, page 104.

do not coincide; for one may be captivated with qualities that seem amiable, or admirable to one's self, but not so, or not equally so, to others. Certain forms there are, and attitudes, and motions, of the human body, which give delight to every beholder; and which, though they may not raise that *tender affection* which one bears to a *favourite*, would however be acknowledged by all to be worthy of admiration. None, I think, will controvert this, who has at any time contemplated a good copy of the Venus, or the Apollo so often mentioned.

All this it is easy to explain upon the principles of association. What is, or appears to be perfect, in the human body, must please, as long as bodily perfection is more useful and more agreeable, than the want of it. And, while virtue and a good understanding are held in any esteem among men, every look of the eye, and turn of the countenance, must give delight, which conveys the idea of acuteness, good humour, modesty, gentleness, affability, generosity, and good nature.

But has each individual of mankind the same ideas of bodily and mental excellence? And, if not, is it possible, that any forms of human beauty should be pleasing to each individual?

I answer, that perceptions may be natural, and opinions right, which are not to be found in each individual of the human race. To hear, and to see, are natural; but some men have the misfortune to be deaf, and some to be blind. The best melodies of Handel are insipid to one who has no musical ear; but Handel's best melodies are charming for all that. Cleanliness, as it promotes both health of body and delicacy of mind, is undoubtedly preferable to its opposite; and yet the Hottentot may choose rather to wallow like a beast, than to live like a man. Nothing brings fuller conviction, than the demonstrations of Euclid; yet reason must be cultivated a little, before it can comprehend

comprehend them. Without faculties to perceive a thing, we cannot judge of it at all; and, before we can judge rightly of any thing, the faculties by which we perceive it must be considerably improved.

Beauty, like other things, cannot without percipient faculties be perceived; nor accurately perceived, without improved faculties. Till we have seen a variety of human figures, and learned to distinguish by the eye those bodily proportions that are best adapted to the several bodily functions, we cannot be competent judges of the human *shape*: nor of the human *face*, unless we have seen many faces, compared them together, observed how the features and the mind operate on each other, traced the connection between certain appearances in the countenance and certain states of the soul and body; nor, perhaps, unless we have also received from nature, (what all have not) that peculiar sort of penetration, which enables one to judge of the thoughts and temper, from the looks and behaviour.

As one is less or more penetrating, less or more observant, and worse or better informed, in these respects, one will be less or more, what Terence calls, *Elegans formarum spectator*, a nice critick in beauty. And among persons, who in these respects are all equally accomplished, we may venture to affirm, that in regard to human beauty there will be no material difference of opinion.

Nor, indeed, in regard to any sort of beauty. Two persons equally, and well skilled in the nature of the horse, will not differ in their judgment of the beauty of that sort of animal. In every species of visible things, that are liable to disorder, or capable of improvement, those forms will convey the most pleasing ideas, and consequently be accounted the most beautiful, which seem to be most perfect, or to come nearest

nearest perfection. But perfection, or the degrees of imperfection, in any individual, can be perceived by those only, who understand the nature of the species to which it belongs; and of many a species the nature cannot be understood, except by those, whom inborn discernment, and extensive and accurate observation, have enabled to study it successfully.

So much for the origin of our ideas of Beauty. In all cases, it seems possible to account for them upon the principles of association, except, perhaps, in that single one, of colours giving pleasure, and being called beautiful, merely because they are bright, or because they are delicate. For with bright and delicate colours, especially the former, children are delighted, long before they know any thing of elegance in shape, motion, or attitude, or can form any judgment of the usefulness, perfection, or imperfection, of things visible. Yet so far seems our taste, even for this sort of beauty, to depend upon association, that no degree of splendor, or of softness, will ever reconcile us to any colour, which we know to be the effect, or the necessary concomitant, of disagreeable qualities.

If this enquiry shall be thought too long, as an example, let it be considered as a digression. It is now finished; and I return to my subject.

## S E C T. V.

*External Associations. — Recapitulation.*

SOME people contract strange habits of, what may be called, External Association. I call it so; because the body is more concerned in it than the mind, and external things than ideas. They connect a certain action with a certain object so, that without the one they cannot easily perform the other; although, independently on habit, there is no connection between them. I have heard of a clergyman, who could not compose his sermon, except when he held a foot-rule in his hand; and of one, who, while he was employed in study, would always be rolling between his fingers a parcel of peas, whereof he constantly kept a trencher full, within reach of his arm. I knew a gentleman who would talk a great deal in company, by the help of a large pin, which he held between his thumb and fore-finger; but, when he lost his pin, his tongue seemed at the same instant to lose its volubility; and he never was at ease, till he had provided himself with another implement of the same kind. Locke speaks of a young man, who in one particular room where an old trunk stood could dance very well; but in any other room, if it wanted such a piece of furniture, could not dance at all. The Tatler mentions a more probable instance, of a lawyer, who in his pleadings used always to be twisting about his finger a piece of packthread, which the punsters of that time called, with some reason, the thread of his discourse. One day, a client of his had a mind to see, how he would acquit himself without it; and stole it from him. The consequence

consequence was, that the orator became silent in the middle of his harangue, and the client lost his cause.

Such examples may be uncommon; but many persons are to be met with, who have contracted similar habits. You may see a boy, while repeating his catechism, button and unbutton his coat a dozen times; and, when learning to write, screw his features unknowingly into a variety of forms, as if he meant by the motion of those parts to imitate that of his pen. Some men there are, who no sooner bid you good morrow, than they thrust a snuff-box into your hand; and some can hardly either speak or think, without gnawing their nails, scratching their head, or fumbling in their pockets.

It should be our care to guard against awkward habits, and such as make us unnecessarily dependent on things and places: and we ought to be very thankful to those, who by friendly admonition would reform such improprieties in our behaviour. For peculiarities, which we cannot discern in ourselves, may be very glaring, as well as ungraceful, in the eyes of others: and, therefore, if we will not listen to advice on these points, we may in time, and without any bad meaning, make ourselves ridiculous. It has been recommended to musicians, and others who have occasion to act, or to speak, in publick, to practise frequently before a looking-glass; that they may correct evil habits by their own judgment. The rule is not a bad one; but in all ordinary cases, I would rather trust to the opinion of a judicious friend. For to our own infirmities it is to be feared that we are often partial, and sometimes blind: and the frequent use of the mirror has been found, at least in the male sex, rather to encourage grimace, than to promote a taste for elegance.

So much for that operation of the human mind, which by modern philosophers has been called THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

It is commonly referred to the imagination; for which reason I have spoken of it in this place: but, from the examples given, it will appear to be owing in part to habits affecting the memory, and the outward senses.

The doctrine is not peculiar to modern philosophy. Aristotle, speaking of Recollection, or active remembrance, insinuates, with his usual brevity, that the relations, by which we are led from one thought to another, in tracing out, or *hunting after* (as he calls it) any particular thought which does not immediately occur, are chiefly three, *Resemblance*, *Contrariety*, and *Contiguity* \*. And this enumeration of the associating principles does not differ, in any thing material, from what is here given. I reduced them to five, *Resemblance*, *Contrariety*, *Nearness of Situation*, *the relation of Cause and Effect*, and *Custom* or *Habit*. Now the three last may very well be referred to that one which Aristotle calls *Contiguity*. *Nearness of Situation* is nothing else. In its influence a *Cause* may be said to be, because it really is, *contiguous* to its *Effect*. And two things or ideas cannot be associated by *Custom*, so as that the one shall introduce the other into the mind; unless they have, once and again, or once at least, been *in company together*, or thought of *at the same time*.

\* The passage is quoted above. Essay on Memory. Chap. II.

## C H A P. III.

## Remarks on Genius.

**B**Y Memory, we acquire knowledge. By Imagination, we *invent*; that is, produce arrangements of ideas and objects that were never so arranged before.

By Imagination, also, in certain cases, we are enabled to *judge*, because qualified to form distinct ideas of those things in nature, art, and science, which exercise our reason, or call forth our affections.

For, in conformity with modern language, I ascribed to imagination two distinct, though congenial, faculties: “first, the power of apprehending or conceiving ideas, simply as they are in themselves, without any view to their reality: and secondly, the power of combining into new forms, or assemblages, those thoughts, ideas, or notions, which we may have derived from experience or from information.”

The talent of invention, applied to useful purposes, is called *Genius*. Imagination, united with some other mental powers, and operating merely as a percipient faculty, in conveying suitable impressions of what is elegant, sublime, or beautiful in art and nature, is called *Taste*.

I mean not to enter, with any degree of minuteness, into the *analysis* of Taste and Genius. Nor is it necessary that I should. That matter has been fully and accurately discussed by an abler hand; I mean, by the learned Dr. Gerard: to whose writings and conversation, (for he was my master in philosophy) and to whose friendship on many occasions in life,

I am



I am happy in this opportunity of declaring, that I am deeply indebted.

The remarks I have to offer, on Genius and Taste (which in a discourse on Imagination cannot be entirely overlooked) shall be brief, and few, and chiefly of a practical nature.

To qualify the human mind for invention, that is, for forming new and useful arrangements, of things or of ideas, experience, and good sense, as well as imagination, are necessary. In dreams, and in disease, imagination often operates with astonishing vivacity: but that is not Genius, because it is not regulated by knowledge or judgment, and tends to no useful purpose\*.

I mention this, with a view to combat an opinion, as old at least as the age of Horace, and not uncommon in modern times; — that Genius, especially poetical genius, is nothing more than a certain warmth of fancy, or enthusiasm of mind, which is all-sufficient in itself, and stands in no need of judgment, or good sense, to give it direction and regularity. Under the influence of this idle conceit, Horace tells us, that some of the poets of his time shut themselves up in cells; avoiding the scenes of observation and business, and when they showed themselves in publick, affected a total disregard to the customs of the world: as if ignorance, rusticity, and madness could qualify them for instructing or entertaining mankind. But Horace teaches a different doctrine. He declares Good Sense to be the source of all good writing: and recommends it to the man of genius, to study nature, to mingle in society, and to make himself acquainted with the manners and characters of men, and with the various ways in which they express their passions and sentiments †.

\* This phrase must be taken with some grains of allowance. See *An Essay on Dreaming*.

† Hor. Ar. Poet. 295—318.

And indeed, if we were to recollect particulars, the history of literature, as well as the nature of the thing, would bear testimony to the poet's determination. Arts and sciences owe their improvement, and genius its most illustrious displays, not to monks, and hermits, and half-witted enthusiasts, but to such men as Homer, Socrates, Xenophon, Sophocles, Demosthenes, Cicero, Cæsar, Bacon, Shakespeare, Milton, Clarendon, Addison, Lyttelton : men, who studied life and manners, as well as books ; who took part in the business of society ; and gave proof of the soundest judgment, as well as of a most comprehensive mind.

Two things may be remarked concerning Genius : first, that it is not a common, but rather a rare accomplishment ; and secondly, that it appears in different degrees, and under a great variety of forms.

1. It is not a common, but rather a rare endowment. All men are teachable ; but few possess the power of useful invention. Such is the will of our Creator. And it is right that it should be so. Life has oft been likened to a warfare : and civil society may in this respect be compared to an army ; that in it there must be some to contrive and command, but that far the greater number have nothing to do but to obey. If every man were an inventor and a projector, there would be such a multiplicity of rivalships and jarring interests, and such a spirit would predominate of independence and of pride, as could not fail to introduce confusion into human affairs ; and many of the lower employments of life, which are essential to the general welfare, would be totally abandoned. For if all men were equal in abilities, they would all aspire to an equality of condition ; a state of things, which is proved by the experience of every age to be unattainable ; and of which, if we consider how  
necessary

necessary subordination is to publick good, we shall be satisfied, that, if it could be attained, it would not be expedient. As Providence has made us differ in the form of our bodies; and some are swift, and others unwieldy, some weak, and others strong; it would seem to be no less the intention of Providence, that we should differ in the capacity of our minds: for thus we are the better qualified to discharge, with pleasure to ourselves, and with benefit to the publick, the duties belonging to the different professions that take place in society.

2. Genius appears in various degrees, and in a great variety of forms. As to its degrees: — how vast the difference between the author of the Iliad, and him who composed the odes that bear the name of Anacreon! To those who invent arts and sciences, or make a discovery of new truths by investigation (for many important truths are discovered by accident) the highest honours are undoubtedly due. And yet great genius may be exerted in improving the inventions of another; or in setting truths that are already known to some, in such convenient lights as may make them known to many. None of Newton's Commentators lay claim to an equality of genius with that incomparable philosopher. But he who explains the Newtonian system so, as to make it intelligible to ordinary understandings, will be allowed to possess Genius, and to deserve well of mankind. For this cannot be done, without a talent (which is by no means common) for contriving such arguments, and modes of illustration, as are most likely to be heard with pleasure, and to convey distinct ideas and full conviction.

The varieties of human genius are innumerable. One man has a genius in mechanicks, another in architecture; or in painting; musick, poetry, geometry, medicine, eloquence; and one may make progress, and devise improvements, in one of these arts,  
who

who could not in another, or at least not without more laborious application. And some men have appeared, who gave proof of an universal genius, and that they were capable of making discoveries in any art or science, to which they thought fit to apply themselves. These varieties are certainly owing to adequate causes; but what those are, it may be as difficult to ascertain, as why some men are tall, and others short, some made for swiftness, and some for strength.

Arts there are, and sciences, wherein any man of sense, who is willing to be industrious, may make such proficiency as will enable him to perform in them with reputation. And such are most of the necessary arts. For that which it may be any man's business to understand, Providence has kindly placed within the reach of every capacity. We do not often hear of a man, whom want of genius renders unfit for husbandry, navigation, law, commerce, war, or any of the common employments of life. But to command a fleet, or an army, to preside in a court of justice, or lay down rules for improving commerce or agriculture, are offices, which can fall to the share of very few, and for which not one, perhaps, in a thousand is fully qualified, even though he were to receive a suitable education. Genius is indispensable in the fine arts, particularly, in architecture, painting, and poetry: for these, being not necessary to life, but only ornamental, are valued, rather in proportion to the degree of pleasure with which they affect the beholder, than according to their intrinsic usefulness: and a good critic is pleased with those poems, pictures, or buildings only, which have more than ordinary excellence, and evince more than common abilities in the poet, painter, or architect. Thus reasons, and thus determines Horace, in regard to Poetry. "In some things, says he, there is a mediocrity, which  
" may be, and ought to be endured. A pleader is held in estima-

“ tion, though perhaps less eloquent than Meffala; and a lawyer.  
 “ though not so learned as Aulus. But mediocrity in poets is not  
 “ permitted, or pardoned, by gods, by men, or by booksellers.  
 “ For as, at an entertainment, bad musick, and sweetmeats ill-  
 “ seasoned or ill-prepared, are offensive; because an entertain-  
 “ ment might very well be without them; so poetry, which  
 “ was invented and made for the express purpose of giving plea-  
 “ sure, must, when it falls short of excellence, *fail to please*, and  
 “ come near to be thought contemptible\*.”

This doom has been called severe; but will hardly be thought so, if we suppose, that Horace is speaking of poetry, as addressed to those who are judges of it. To such persons, whatever seems in any degree faulty must be in the same degree displeasing: and therefore poetry cannot answer its end, if it is not so far faultless, as to give no offence; which will not be the case, if it is not thought perfect in its kind, or something at least above mediocrity. So in the other fine arts. Bad musick may gratify an unskilful ear, and bad painting an inexperienced eye; but he, who is a true critick in these arts, would rather hear no musick, and see no pictures, than be obliged to attend to such as he cannot approve.

It has been disputed; whether the same force of mind, that makes a man ingenious in any one art, would not, with a proper education, make him so in any other. The dispute, like many others, may be presumed to have arisen from words not well understood. If by Ingeniousness be meant nothing more than what is commonly called Capacity, or Docility, we might determine the question in the affirmative; in regard to those arts, at least, which are common, or congenial. An expert joiner might, no doubt, have proved equally expert, as a ship-

\* Hor. Ar. Poet. 368—373.

wright, blacksmith, or watchmaker, if his education had been answerable: and he, who is eloquent as a preacher, might have been no less eloquent as a lawyer or senator. The same talents may, I believe, be applied, with the same success, to moral and to natural philosophy: and they, who are masters of an elegant prose-style, may, with a competence of the necessary learning, acquit themselves creditably in various kinds of prose composition; in philosophy, history, theology, or politicks. Geometry, too, and mechanicks, and astronomy, are so nearly allied, and so level to the human understanding, that those who are capable of the one can hardly be supposed incapable of the other. To a right comprehension of the principles of these, and the like arts and sciences, few persons properly educated, and tolerably industrious, will be found unequal, if they labour under no intellectual weakness.

But, if we take Genius to mean, what is frequently understood by that term, a bias of the mind towards some particular arts, joined with such powers of invention as make one remarkable, we shall probably see cause to decide the question in the negative: with a reserve, however, in favour of those universal geniuses, who are said to have now and then appeared in the world. Homer in Epick poetry, Newton in geometry and philosophy, Livy in history, Handel in musick, and Raphael in painting, were extraordinary geniuses. But I cannot think, that any of them would have been so eminent in any other walk of invention, as in that which he made choice of: that Newton, for example, could have rivalled Homer in poetry, or Handel in musick; or that Raphael in history could have vied with Livy, or Livy as a painter equalled Raphael. For, how many poets, painters, musicians, philosophers, and historians, and those too of considerable ingenuity, have endeavoured to reach the merit of these great masters, and found after all, that

they were in pursuit of what they could never attain! How many commanders of armies have proposed for their pattern Cefar and Annibal! And how very few are to be compared with Annibal or Cefar in military genius! Orators have been in request in all ages: and yet, to this day, Demosthenes and Cicero are at the head of the profession.

A man of moderate talents may learn to perform with applause in several arts. To write smooth verses, to draw a tolerable picture of a human face, to play and even to make an agreeable tune, to compose a history or philosophical discourse that shall be read with pleasure, requires no more capacity, than thousands in every age and nation are possessed of. But, to be a great poet, painter, musician, historian, or philosopher, one must have not only that capacity which is common to all men of sense, but also a particular and distinguishing Genius, which learning may improve, but cannot bestow. It is no presumption, to suppose, that Heaven should endow with extraordinary talents those who are intended for extraordinary purposes. And therefore, I do not think, that Cicero expresses himself too strongly, when he says, that "without something of divine inspiration no man was ever great."

Genius is not confined to particular professions, or to any one rank of life. In the cottage it may be met with, and in the palace; in the city, and in the hamlet; in the shop of the meanest mechanick, as well as in the most famous schools of learning. For, as every art is improveable, Providence has so ordered human affairs, that in every class of artists a genius may be found, who is capable of making improvements. But let not those be discouraged, who discern not in themselves any extraordinary abilities. It is not requisite, that every seaman should be an astronomer, or that every private soldier should understand the

theory of war. Genius and greatness are almost equally exposed to the assaults of envy: both must encounter mortifications, that are not known to the majority of mankind: and both are liable to the influence of a restless ambition, which is often fatal to happiness, and not always friendly to one's worldly interest. Mediocrity of talents, as well as of fortune, seems indeed to be the most desirable state, to those who have no other wish, than to be happy and useful: and he who is diligent and sober-minded, in any honest calling, may perform his part with comfort to himself, and with advantage to society.

Nor let the man of genius imagine, that nature has done every thing for him, and that he has nothing to do for himself. In one or two instances, uncultivated genius may have risen to distinction: but who will say, that equal genius, with culture, is not more likely to be distinguished? We have heard of Dramatick writers, who, trusting to their natural powers, whereof, it seems, they had a higher idea, than any body else ever had, thought learning below their ambition, because Shakspeare was not learned: a conceit, which, far from being a proof of genius, was only an indication of folly, and an apology for idleness. Shakspeare, it is true, had little school-learning; but we must not thence infer, that he was either ignorant or idle. In observing the characters of men, and the appearances of the inanimate and irrational world, as well as in the study of his native tongue, of which he was a compleat master, he must have been indefatigable: and he seems to have possessed, in a most uncommon degree, the talent of selecting, from the books that came in his way, such knowledge as might be of use to him in his poetical capacity.

Homer, Plutarch, Pythagoras, Thales, Herodotus, and other antients, spent many years in travelling from place to place, and collecting all the knowledge of the time, for the improvement



of their genius. Plato, at the age of fourscore, did not desist from revising and polishing the style of his Dialogues; that style, which had already been polished to a degree of perfection, whereof before his time the world had seen no example. Cicero was all his life assiduous in study: and Cesar, the most astonishing genius that history has recorded, wrote an account of his own wars in the midst of danger and business, and did not think the hours lost, which he employed on a treatise of Latin grammar. What a vast idea should we have formed of Livy's industry, as well as eloquence, if he had composed no more than the thirty five books now remaining of his Roman history; which, however, are hardly one fourth of the whole! — I may add, that Milton was one of the most learned men, as well as the sublimest genius, of modern times: that Bacon and Newton were profoundly skilled in history and classical erudition, as well as in every part of philosophy: that Swift for several years studied at the rate of ten hours a day: and that Addison, before he left the university, was so great a master in antient literature, as to have published some of the finest Latin verses that had appeared in the world since the Augustan age. — But there is no end of the examples, that might be brought, to prove, that the most famous men of every nation were equally ingenious and industrious. Great talents, unaided by industry, evaporate in vain wishes that produce no effort; or exhaust themselves in momentary and undirected efforts, that end in disappointment.

I will not undertake to trace out the efficient causes of those varieties of genius, which are observable among mankind. Genius being the talent of useful invention, and invention the work of imagination, it may seem to follow, that whatever diversifies imagination, must give variety to genius. If the fancy have acquired, by nature or by habit, a tendency to pass from causes to effects,

and from effects to causes, it may be presumed, that the genius, aided by accurate observation, will be philosophical. If there be a propensity to trace out resemblances, and to bring those ideas together which are *like* one another, the genius may possibly exert itself in some imitative art, as painting, or poetry; especially, if there be superadded a taste for the beauties of nature, with great sensibility of temper, and a contemplative mind: but, in persons less romantic, and much engaged in the business of society, or who have not in early life been accustomed to survey the grand phenomena of creation, if the same associating principle of resemblance predominate, it may perhaps give rise to Wit; which consists, for the most part, in the unexpected discovery of similitude between things apparently unlike. A tenacious memory, with a disposition to associate those ideas that are related in time and place, seems likely to produce a genius for historical narrative.

All this may be said, and is probable enough; but not sufficient to solve the difficulty. For still it may be asked, Whence comes it, that one imagination should be more, and another less, subject to the influence of any one associating principle? Why should Resemblance attract the chief notice of one mind; contiguity of place and time, that of another; and the relation of cause and effect, that of a third? Is this the consequence of habits contracted in the beginning of life? Then why have not all children the same turn of genius, who have had the same education? — Or is it merely constitutional?

In fact, I believe, it is owing partly to constitution, and partly to habit: but that these two causes are so blended in forming and varying human genius, that one can hardly say, in any particular case, how far the one, or the other, may have been predominant. In the most discouraging circumstances we have seen genius  
unexpectedly

unexpectedly arise; and a peculiar turn of temper, and of capacity prevail, in opposition to all the power both of precept and of example.

The passions, no doubt, have some influence in forming the genius. You cannot expect to find the same talents in a chearful and a melancholy man; in an arrogant and an humble spirit; in one who loves retirement, and in one who is fond of the bustle and glitter of publick life. Wit and humour, when united, as in Swift, with misanthropy, pride and indignation, will vent itself in such virulent ridicule, as makes men despise and hate one another: but, if accompanied with mildness and benevolence, may give rise to that good-natured joculariry, which we admire in Addison, and which sweetens the temper, while it enlivens the fancy.

Habits contracted in our younger years may also give a bias to the inventive powers. When children are much in the company of seamen, of soldiers, of mechanicks, we see them acquire habits of attending, with more than ordinary pleasure, to the conversation of such people. Hence they come to understand something of naval affairs, military transactions, mechanical curiosities; to be interested in them, and take a liking to them: and this liking, if strong, and accompanied with good parts, will no doubt go a great way in forming a peculiarity of genius. Those who relish harmony of language, and read the works of poets, especially of good poets, very early in life, acquire in time a poetical taste, which, if other circumstances be favourable, will produce something like a genius for poetry.

Among contemporary poets, we may sometimes observe a similarity of genius; which is probably occasioned by their imitating one another. When Donne and Cowley had introduced, about the middle of the last century, a taste for irregular measures of

verse, and for interlarding every species of poem with childish witticism, Sprat, and Otway, and many others, fell into the fashion; and one would almost think that the same spirit had animated them all.

But it seems to me, that they are minds of an inferiour order, which are thus formed, or enslaved, by early habits; true, original, and distinguishing genius being the gift of nature, though improvable by good education, and liable to be in some degree perverted by bad. At the time when Cowley had infected the whole nation with witticism, Milton arose; and gave his country a specimen of the truest, and most sublime poetry: in framing which he was directed, partly by his exquisite taste in antient learning, but chiefly by his own incomparable genius.

Yet Milton himself, though not enslaved, was swayed a little, by the prejudices of his age, and the habits of his early youth. And I observe, that the fashion of the time is by all criticks admitted as an apology for an Author's more trivial faults: whence we may infer, that, in the general opinion of mankind, the most elevated minds cannot wholly resist the force of example, and that the bent of the genius is partly determined by outward circumstances. The very learned writer of an Inquiry into the life and writings of Homer has proved, or at least made it highly probable, that the great father of poetry himself was in some degree indebted, for the transcendency of his genius, to the manners of his age, and to the political and military establishments wherewith it was his fortune to be acquainted.

When I said, that those are geniuses of an inferiour order, which are formed or enslaved by early habits, I did not mean to insinuate, that no great genius ever became an imitator. Virgil imitates many poets, and particularly Homer, from whom he has borrowed the plan, and many of the sentiments, images, and phrases, of the

Encid:

Eneid: but Virgil's style, and manner, and the numbers of his verse, are altogether his own; and are characterised by a peculiar dignity, correctness, and delicacy, not to be met with in Homer, nor indeed in any other poet. Tasso imitates Homer in his plan, and Virgil in his style. Pope imitates Boileau and Dryden: but his own genius is apparent in every part of his works; he has more fire, and fancy, than the French author; and he is more sublime, and more uniformly harmonious, than his English master.—In fact all good poets imitate one another more or less: and I am not sure, whether Homer himself has not in some things condescended to imitate Hesiod\*. But in the writings of a great genius, even when he imitates, nay when he is only a translator, there is always something peculiar and extraordinary.

\* Hòmer is generally supposed to have been before Hesiod. I incline to a different opinion, but am not positive in it. For in the latter I think I find not only the poetical art, but even the Greek tongue, less cultivated, than in the former. And if Hesiod had known Homer, I presume he would have mentioned him, and been somewhat more particular in what he says of the Trojan war. His plan would not have hindered it; whereas Homer's could hardly admit the mention of Hesiod. The Aescraean bard laments his having had the misfortune to live in the fifth age of the world; wishing, that he had died in an earlier, or been reserved to a later period: now this fifth age, according to his own account, immediately followed those heroick times, in which happened the war of Thebes and of Troy: so that Homer, if he had flourished (as Cicero and Dr. Clarke conjecture he did) many ages before Hesiod, must have been born before the Trojan war; which is altogether incredible. Dr. Clarke's ingenious argument, drawn from the prosody of the Greek word *καλον*; the first syllable of which, he observes, that Homer uniformly pronounces long, while Hesiod and the latter poets have it sometimes long, and sometimes short:—this argument, I say, does not seem very material; such changes of pronunciation being common in all languages. Herodotus and Varro make these venerable bards contemporaries. There seems indeed to have been no great interval of time between them. And it is evident, from the general colour of their style, either that the one imitates the other, or that both have imitated some poet more antient than either. See Hesiod. Opera et Dies. vers. 172. — Cicero de Senectute. cap. 15. — Clark. Annot. ad Hom. Iliad. Lib. 2. vers. 43.

But,

But, however we may be puzzled in resolving the varieties of human genius into their proximate causes, we can be at no loss to comprehend their final cause, or the intention of Providence in establishing them. By these diversities of capacity and character, men are led to different employments; which not only prevent oppositions of interest; but also supply a profusion of conveniences; adorn human life with an endless variety of arts; and enlarge the sphere of social virtue, by opening sources innumerable of friendly communication between the various individuals and nations that compose the great society of mankind.

When, together with the multitude of arts that support life, we consider the tribes of artists by whom they are cultivated, and that in the choice of a profession many are determined by their own free-will; we must be filled with admiration, at the complexity of human society, and the pliability of the human mind, as well as at the wisdom of the Creator, in thus providing a genius for every art, and a gratification for every natural desire. How many artists are employed in furnishing what is necessary to the composition of that common article, Bread! The baker must purchase his flour from the miller, and his yeast from the brewer; and neither flour nor yeast can be had without agriculture. The husbandman depends, for the implements of his trade, on those who make for him the plough, the harrow, the sickle, the scythe, and the waggon; and these cannot be made without iron and wood. In many places, where they are necessary, wood and iron cannot be had, without the care of the merchant, and the labours of the mariner. Mariners traverse the ocean in ships; and neither can they guide their vessel, nor the merchant conduct his commerce, without that sort of knowledge, to which ink and paper are necessary. The manufacture of paper reminds us of him, who weaves the cloth whereof it is made; of the spinner,  
who

who draws and twists the threads for the weaver; of the labourer, who prepares the flax for the spinning-wheel; and of the tiller of the ground, who sows the flax, and gathers, and cures it. Few or none of these people can work without tools of iron: and that most useful metal, before it can be forged into instruments, must pass successively through the hands of the miner, the smelter, and the smith. To all this we may add, that no artificer can live without a house, and food, and cloaths, and other conveniencies, which are supplied by the industry of the shoemaker, taylor, tallow-chandler, joiner, currier, house-carpenter, slater, stone-cutter, brick-layer, glazier, mason, and architect.

From this one example, thus slightly prosecuted, we may form an idea of the mutual subserviency of man to man, and of one art to another. And hence let us learn to set a proper value on industry and manufacture. The meanest artificer in society, if honest and diligent, is worthy of honour: not only, as he supports himself and his dependents without any charge to the publick, and thus gives the means of life and of comfort to several human creatures; but also, because he adds to the fund of national wealth and splendour, and is instrumental in providing necessaries to all, and convenience and ornament to those of higher condition.

To pursue this speculation a little further. Of the multitude of trades established in society, how few are there, which *we* would choose to make the business of our lives! how many, which we should think it a misery to be compelled to follow! Nay, some there are no doubt, which we may think it strange, that any human being could ever be tempted to engage in. Yet we do not find, that any useful art perishes; or that artists of any denomination are wanting, while there is a chance, that they shall meet with encouragement. This at least is not often the case, where regular society has been of long standing.

And is not this a proof of three things? First, that a wise and good Providence governs the world? Secondly, that human genius is susceptible of boundless variety? And thirdly, that happiness is not confined to, nor excluded from, any station?—For is it not Providence, that gives this pliability to human nature? And, if it were not for this, would society be so happy, or arts so flourishing? And if happiness were not to be found even in the lowest ranks of life, would men ever make choice of those callings, that oblige them to pass their days in a mean condition, and in narrow circumstances?

I grant, that many are forced into a way of life, which they do not relish. But every trade can boast of volunteers. And, in ordinary cases, both the one and the other are found to live not uncomfortably. The impressed seaman becomes in a little time as brave and as chearful as any of his companions. And the labourer, who lives and dies in the hamlet where he was born, and never had the means of changing his condition for a better, often enjoys a degree of health and happiness, whereof the rich and the great have no experience, and could not easily form an idea.

There is hardly any occupation, in this free country at least, that to us appears more forlorn, than that of those who, in the hyperbolic language of the poet,

Deep plunged in mines, forget a sun was made.

And yet I have been assured, by a man of humanity and observation, the superintendant of an English colliery, that his people would rather work in their pits, three hundred feet under ground, than labour in a field of hay in the finest sunshine.—To us, who are educated with high notions of liberty, it may seem wonderful, that men could live at all, or with any degree of comfort, under a despotical sovereign. And yet the subjects of despotism are not always miserable. In Russia, as well as in more moderate governments, you may meet with merry peasants, chearful assemblies, and happy families. So great is the power of habit, and so various the inclinations



nations of the human mind, that honesty and humble industry, with contentment, may enjoy the means both of peace, and of pleasure, under any form of government.

What! it may be answered, Are all forms of policy, and all human occupations, equally friendly to happiness? Then, why contend for liberty? Or why complain, when by the severity of parents and guardians, or by the lowness of our fortune, we are compelled to engage for life in a disagreeable employment?

I admit not the inference. I speak of the goodness of God, in giving that versatility to man's nature, which makes it susceptible of comfort in every state in which it can learn to be content. And wretched indeed would our condition be, if our felicity depended more upon outward circumstances, than upon the frame of the mind: for, in that case, good and evil would be no more in our power, than riches and high station are now; and the miserable would as far exceed the happy in number, as the common people do their rulers.

But far be it from me to insinuate, that all governments are equally good; or that there is no material distinction between competence and want, moderate and excessive labour, a healthy and an unhealthy, or a creditable and a mean employment. The human body *may* live, and enjoy health, in the polar circle and torrid zone, as well as in the temperate climates; yet who, on equal terms, would not prefer the last? In adversity, and in sickness, the mind of a good man *may* be happy: yet, who will say, that health and prosperity are not desirable; or that to crave protection against the oppressor, or to resist, even unto blood, the assassin who would maim our bodies, is not worth our while? Self-preservation, the avoidance of pain, a desire to rise from lower to higher degrees of happiness, to gain the esteem of those with whom we live, and to promote our worldly interest, where it can be done by innocent means, are principles of action, to which nature has given all men

an unquestionable right ; and which, as they are springs of virtue and publick spirit, must be allowed to be productive of the best consequences.

Nothing is more friendly to the soul of man, than Liberty ; which is the birthright of every rational being, and which none can without cruelty deprive us of, unless by our crimes we have proved ourselves unworthy of it. Despotick governments are therefore unjust, as far as they deprive the innocent of this prime blessing : and it never can be for the good of mankind, that injustice should triumph, or that innocence should be born down. Besides, activity and genius flourish in free governments, but in the abodes of tyranny disappear : and however it may fare with some individuals, society will always decay or prosper, as genius and industry are discountenanced or promoted.

Freedom of choice in regard to an employment is a part of man's natural liberty, which parents and guardians ought not to violate. For though it may be possible to be happy in any state, it is also possible, that, by having an employment forced upon us, we may be made miserable for life. And much it is to be regretted, that in this country it should at any time be necessary to compel seamen into the service of the publick ; and that, from lowness of circumstances, a man of spirit should ever be left to languish in obscurity, without any hope of emerging into that tract of business, for which his genius qualifies him, and to which he naturally aspires. But this last is only one of those many evils, which, in order to raise our views to a better life, Providence has annexed to the present state of imperfection ; and a remedy may be said to be in some measure provided for it, in the natural pliability of the human mind. And the other evil is a consequence, unavoidable as many think, of our living under a free government, in the neighbourhood of an ambitious and powerful enemy, and depending on our naval power for the preservation of our liberties.

## C H A P. IV.

## Of Taste, and its Improvement.

SOME ideas are too complex, to admit of logical definition.

When this is the case, we must have recourse to description ; and give a detail of the more important, if we should not be able to ascertain the essential qualities. And, if we can illustrate a subject, I believe it is not material, whether that be done by definition and syllogism, or by any other method equally brief, convincing, and intelligible.

It was said, that “ Imagination, united with some other mental powers, and operating as a percipient faculty, in conveying suitable impressions of what is elegant, sublime, or beautiful, in art or nature, is called TASTE.” This account may be right as far as it goes ; but is not sufficiently comprehensive. By pointing out its defects, we make amends for them. They may be reduced to two.

First ; Sublimity, Beauty, and Elegance, are not the only things in art and nature, which gratify Taste. There is also a taste in imitation, in harmony, and in ridicule. He who takes delight in truth, in virtue, in simplicity, may be said to have a taste for it. And, not to be charmed with such qualities ; or to approve their opposites ; to be insensible of harmony ; to relish gross buffoonery ; to prefer bad pictures to good, and finical ornament to manly simplicity, are proofs of bad taste ; as disregard to truth, and indifference to virtue, are, of both a bad taste, and a bad heart.

Secondly ; As Elegance, Sublimity, Beauty, and the other qualities here mentioned as objects of taste, are all good and agreeable ;

able; we might, by trusting to the definition, be led to suppose, that Taste, being an inlet to pleasure only, is not connected with painful emotions. But, in the works of human art, it is the office of Taste, to discern, not only what is excellent, but also what is faulty; and to be delighted with the one, and dissatisfied with the other, according as that approaches to perfection, and this deviates from it. To read Blackmore and Milton with the same relish, or the same indifference; or, while we admire the latter, not to be disgusted with the former, would be a sign of bad taste, or of total insensibility. A goodnatured critick may confine his *remarks* to the beauties of his author: but, if he have true discernment, it is impossible for him not to perceive, and be offended with, the blemishes.

Since, then, that sort of mental sagacity, which we call Taste, is too complex to be characterized in a short definition; I proceed to enumerate those faculties or talents, which must be united in the person who possesses it.

To be a person of taste, it seems necessary, that one have, first, a lively and correct imagination; secondly, the power of distinct apprehension; thirdly, the capacity of being easily, strongly, and agreeably affected, with sublimity, beauty, harmony, exact imitation, &c.; fourthly, Sympathy, or Sensibility of heart; and, fifthly, Judgment, or Good Sense, which is the principal thing, and may not very improperly be said to comprehend all the rest.

I. Good taste implies Lively Imagination. This talent qualifies one, for readily understanding an author's purpose; tracing the connection of his thoughts; forming the same views of things which he had formed; and clearly conceiving the several images or ideas that the artist describes or delineates.

In this respect, the minds of different men are differently constituted. Some can enter into a description of what they have seen,

or

or of what is familiar; and follow an author's train of thought, when he lays down a plan, and proceeds accordingly: but are not able to comprehend such thoughts or images as are uncommon; or to mark those delicacies of connection, which give surprise, or which imitate the desultory operations of enthusiasm, or any other ardent passion. Yet these delicate transitions are among the chief beauties of poetry. The philosopher lays down a plan, and follows it; his business being only, to instruct. But the orator sometimes, and the poet frequently, conceals his plan, and makes you expect something different from what he intends; because his aim is, to please, by working upon your passions, and fancy: which is never more effectually done, than when he exhibits what is at once natural and surprising.—In the end of Virgil's second Georgick, the praises of a country life are, by the poet's management, closely connected with the former part of the book, which treats of trees and vines: but the connection is not obvious to every eye; and they, who do not see it, blame the author for his want of method. The same delicate contrivance appears in the end of the first Georgick: where, from the precepts of agriculture, he makes a nice though natural transition to the prodigies that attended the death of Julius Cæsar, and thence to the calamities of civil war; after which, he resumes with equal art the subject of agriculture, and so concludes the book.

The language of enthusiasm, and of all those passions that strongly agitate the soul, is naturally incoherent; and may appear even extravagant to those, who cannot enter into the views of the speaker, or form an idea of what is passing in his mind. Hence, in the odes of Pindar, and in some of the odes of Gray, which imitate the language of enthusiasm, many readers complain, that they are often at a loss to discover connection between the contiguous sentiments; while others, not more learned perhaps, find

no difficulty in conceiving the progress of ideas, that lead these authors from one thought or image to another. The latter, surely, are the only persons qualified to judge of those odes: and this qualification they seem to derive from their superiour liveliness of fancy. In a word, the imagination of a critick must, in respect of vivacity, be able to keep pace with that of the authors, whom he assumes the privilege of judging, or wishes to read with the true relish. Their powers of invention it is not necessary that he possess: but, in readily apprehending or imagining every thing they are pleased to set before him he cannot be in any degree inferior, without being in the same degree an incompetent judge. If we are unable to conceive a poet's imagery, or enter into his sentiments, we understand him as little, as if we were ignorant of his language.

The greatest liveliness of imagination will, however, avail but little, if it is not *corrected* and regulated by the knowledge of nature, both external or material, and internal or moral. Without this, there cannot be Taste; because one cannot discern, whether the productions of art be natural or unnatural; that is, whether they be good or bad. In acquiring that knowledge of nature, which is necessary to taste, a man needs not descend to the *minutiae* of natural history; but he must contemplate all the striking appearances of the world around him, surveying them in those picturesque attitudes, in which they most powerfully captivate the mind, and awaken the passions.

As means of promoting in young persons a taste for the beauties of external nature, I have in another place \* recommended frequent perusals of the best descriptive poets, particularly Virgil, Spenser, and Thomson; together with some practice in drawing.

\* Essay on Poetry and Musick. Part i. chap. 2.

I may now add, that Homer, Milton, and Shakespear will improve that taste, and at the same time make them acquainted with Moral nature, that is, with human passions and characters; which however, as Horace intimates \*, cannot be thoroughly understood, but by careful observation of men and manners, as they appear in the active scènès of real life.

Liveliness of imagination, though a natural gift, is not unsusceptible of improvement. By studying the works of nature and art; by travelling into foreign countries, and conversing with people of different professions, capacities, and manners; by exploring new scènes of the inanimate world, mountains, vallies, and plains, whether distinguished by their wildness or regularity, by their beauty or grandeur; the memory may be stored with new ideas, which, if properly arranged and ascertained, will give vigour to all the mental powers, and to imagination among the rest. Milton is said to have quickened his fancy, by reading the old romances. And Leonardo da Vinci recommends it to the painter, to go into decayed buildings, and observe the stains on the broken and mouldy walls; where an eye accustomed to look at such things will frequently discern figures resembling clouds, battles, uncommon attitudes, draperies, ludicrous faces, and the like: agreeably to which idea, a pamphlet has been published †, to show, how, from a few random strokes of a pencil dipped in Indian ink, hints may be obtained for the invention of landscapes. Every thing, indeed, that puts us in the way of meeting with novelties, may be considered as a help to the fancy: but care must be taken to methodise those new ideas, lest they seduce from the love of nature, and give a taste for extravagant combinations. Liveliness and correct-

\* Ar. Poet. vers. 317.  
Landscapes. London 1759.

† An Essay to facilitate the inventing of

ness of imagination are eminently and equally conspicuous in Homer: Spenser and Ariosto are not inferior in the first quality, but extremely defective in the second.

II. Sometimes, when one's imagination is lively, and regulated too by an acquaintance with nature, one may, notwithstanding, contract habits of indolence and irregularity in one's studies; which produce a superficial medley of knowledge very detrimental to the native vigour of the mind. And therefore I mentioned Distinct Apprehension, as the second thing necessary to good taste. There are men, who think with precision on every subject: and there are others, whose ideas are always inaccurate and obscure. The former make you understand their meaning at once, and may be known by their clearness of method and of style: the latter use indefinite and superfluous words, confusedly put together; which, though, on familiar topics, they may give a tolerable idea of what is intended, will often leave you at a loss, and perhaps, when any thing uncommon is to be expressed, make it impossible for you to find out what is in the mind of the speaker.

The former, it is obvious, are the only competent judges of what they read; because they are the only persons who perfectly understand it. How comes it, that, on every perusal of Homer, Virgil, or Milton, beauties are discovered, which never struck us before? Is it not, because, the more we are acquainted with these authors, we understand them the better? Elegant writing is distinguished by a thousand little graces, that escape the superficial reader, and are not immediately apparent even to the attentive. And therefore, habits of accurate study are indispensably requisite to form a true critic.

Besides, most performances in the fine arts are intended to raise, in the reader or beholder, certain emotions and sympathies. And it is generally true, that an emotion is lively in proportion to the clearness:



clearness wherewith its object is perceived or apprehended by the mind. A man of obscure apprehension must, therefore, be a man of dull feeling, and so cannot possess true taste; because he is not susceptible of those ardent emotions, which the artist intended to raise, and which in sounder minds his work does actually raise.

It is remarkable, that in every language the most elegant authors are the most perspicuous. Such are Homer and Xenophon in Greek, and Cesar, Cicero, and Virgil, in Latin. A proof, that good taste and clearness of apprehension are inseparable: this last quality being the immediate cause of perspicuity in writing.

For attaining the faculty of distinct apprehension, the best rule that can be given is, to study with accuracy, and with method, every thing we apply to, whether books, or business.—But having already enlarged on this topick, I shall not now pursue it any further.

III. A board may be so shaped and painted, as that a dog shall mistake it for a man; but it does not appear, that he has any pleasure in it, as an *imitation*. Brutes no doubt perceive some of those things which we term ludicrous; but brutes never laugh, nor seem to have any notion of *incongruity*. All animals that see discern light, and probably colours; but man alone perceives, in colours and in figures, that pleasurable quality, which we term *beauty*. The *magnificence* of the starry firmament, of a lofty and craggy mountain, of a thundering cataract, of a tempestuous ocean, has no charms for any terrestrial creature, but man. *Novelty* yields pleasure to rational minds; but the inferiour tribes seem rather to dislike it. Many brutes hear more acutely than we; and some of them may be soothed or alarmed by sound; but brutes have no sense of *harmony*: nay of those men, who hear with equal acuteness, some have a musical ear, and others have not.

In these and the like cases, there seems to be in the human mind a sort of double sensation: one conveyed immediately by the exter-

nal organ; and the other depending, partly on that, and partly on some other faculty.

That there is in our constitution such a thing as a musical ear, a sense of beauty, a taste for sublimity and imitation, a love of novelty, and a tendency to smiles and laughter, will not be denied. And that these senses, or sensibilities, depend partly on the eye and the ear, and yet are to be distinguished from the outward senses of sight and hearing, (for these may exist without the others) is evident from what has been said. They may therefore be called *Secondary Senses*. Some philosophers call them *Reflex*, and some *Internal*. And the pleasures derived from them are termed, by Addison, and Akenfide, Pleasures of Imagination\*.

Others have named them *Emotions*, as if they were a sort of weaker passions. And the name is not improper. For all passions are attended with pleasure or pain, and produce sensible appearances both in the soul and in the body. And the feelings I speak of are all of the agreeable kind; and, where they operate without restraint, do all display themselves externally. The contemplation of beauty, for example, softens the features into a smile. Sublimity raises admiration and astonishment, and novelty often gives surprise; and these passions operate very sensibly on the countenance. Ludicrous objects call forth laughter, which is still more obvious to the eye, as well as to the ear. And the various pleasures that result from imitation do variously affect the face; according to the nature of the object imitated, and the skill displayed by the imitator.

But the name we assign to these modes of perception is not a matter of great moment. When I call them Secondary Senses, I

\* See Hucheson's *Moral Philosophy*; Gerard's *Essay on Taste*; the sixth volume of the *Spectator*; Akenfide's *Pleasures of Imagination*; and Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism*.

would not be understood to find fault with the language of those authors, who in speaking of them have adopted a different phraseology.

Now the third thing necessary to good taste is, Acuteness of (what is here called) Secondary Sensation; or, to express it in other words, “a capacity of being easily, strongly, and agreeably affected, with sublimity, beauty, harmony, exact imitation,” &c.

In this respect also the capacities of different men are very different. Some have no sense of harmony or modulation, either in language, or in musick. Some, who are exceedingly delighted with the Sublime and the Beautiful, have little taste or genius in the way of Ridicule:—Milton is an instance; who excels in grand and elegant description, but whose attempts at humour are nothing but quibble. Others have an exquisite relish for every sort of ludicrous combination, who seem to be little affected with beauty, or with greatness:—Swift is one instance, and the author of *Hudibras* another. To excel equally in the Sublime and in the Ludicrous, is a rare talent: Shakespeare, however, possessed it in a very high degree; and Pope, in a lower: Homer, too, is said to have been eminent in the comick, as well as in the solemn style; though that does not appear from any part of his works now extant. Some authors, of whom Homer is the most illustrious, give no delineations of moral or of material nature, but what bear an exact resemblance to reality; others, like Ariosto, abound in extravagant and unnatural fiction: the former, surely, have a better taste in imitation, as well as a better judgment, than the latter. The sense of harmony assumes various appearances. Pope, for all the smoothness of his numbers, had no musical ear; Milton, though his poetry is most harmonious, writes rugged prose: and Addison, whose prose is the sweetest that can be, is not distinguished as a melodious versifier.

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Some of these varieties may be accounted for, from the power of habit. Of those, who have from nature a musical ear, many perhaps may never have thought of improving that talent, and many have never had the means of improving it: and we seldom acquire any true relish for musick, unless we have been accustomed to it in our younger years. Besides, that sweetness of sound in prose, which is called harmony, is very different from musical harmony or melody: easy articulation belongs to the former; for we never call those words harmonious, which we find it hard to pronounce: but the latter has nothing to do with articulation: and therefore, one may have a taste for the one, who has none for the other. Nor is it to be wondered at, that a harmonious versifier should write in prose without harmony; for this may be the effect of haste or carelessness, or want of practice.

Further; the more we are accustomed, from our early years, to attend to what is great and beautiful; to read sublime poetry, or to associate with persons of a solemn deportment, the less we shall be inclined to give way to the levities of wit and humour. And from him, who is better pleased with the wildness of romance, than with the simplicity of nature and the antients, a taste for correct imitation is not to be expected. These various habits may be owing to various causes, too minute to be specified. Our way of life, our course of study, the company we keep, the taste of the age or of the society to which we belong, have great influence in perverting or improving all our intellectual faculties, and those of taste and genius in particular. I here join taste and genius together. They are kindred powers; and of so near affinity, that the first, perhaps, might be called *passive genius*, and the second *active taste*.

The human mind is always the same: but in one age one set of faculties are cultivated, and another in another; and the pursuits

of men, the states of literature, the modes of taste, and the characters of nations, are varied accordingly. About the middle of the last century, the greater part of English authors were learned and serious, but not very attentive to elegant expression. Under Charles the second, they ran into the opposite extreme, and became giddy, superficial, and indelicate; and none but wits and epigrammatists were accounted men of taste: so that, if the revolution had not taken place, our literature would probably have perished, as well as our laws and liberties. In the reign of Queen Anne, and George the first, wit, learning, and elegance, were happily united. Of late the publick taste seems to have been most effectually gratified by correct expression, and historical and philosophical inquiry.

But whatever influence habit may have in forming the taste and the genius, it must be repeated, that in minds, as well as in bodies, there are constitutional differences. There are men, who can never bring themselves to relish musick; and some are equally disinclined to poetry. And of poets and musicians, as well as of painters, some excel in the grand style, and some in the ludicrous; nor will either class of artists admit, that the other is qualified to prescribe rules for both. And therefore, we are not to expect, that in different men taste should be precisely uniform, or that it should be absolutely perfect in any individual.

Any one of these Secondary senses will form a sort of taste; but to the perfection of this talent the concurrence of them all is necessary. In a man thus accomplished, every object of his contemplation, whether fit to allure by its novelty, astonish by its grandeur, charm by its beauty; please by imitative elegance, or amuse by unexpected incongruity, will awaken that kind, and that degree, of internal satisfaction, which the most enlightened part of mankind would acknowledge to be adequate to the pleasurable

urable qualities of the object. But such perfection of taste is imaginary: as there is not on earth a person, who is not a greater admirer, a more accurate observer, and of course a more competent judge, of some objects of taste, than of others. Rarely have we heard of one man completely skilled in musick, painting, and poetry, or even in any two of those arts. The epick poet undervalues the epigrammatist, who in his turn pronounces all sublime writing to be affected or insipid; the architect is perhaps indifferent to both; and the composer of instrumental symphonies to all the three. There may be exceptions: but it is in general true, that

One science only will one genius fit,  
So vast is art, so narrow human wit;  
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,  
But oft in those confin'd to single parts.

It is easy to know, how far an author's taste may be deficient in this respect. If, while he aims at elevation, he disappoint the reader by mean language, or groveling ideas, (which is generally the case with Blackmore) it is a sign, that he has no taste in Sublimity. If he appear fond of describing what is unamiable or ungraceful, and disgust you with vile allusions and filthy images, (which is too often the case with Swift and Juvenal) he gives proof of an indelicate mind, that either has no sense or love of beauty, or, which is worse, does not choose to indulge it. If his views of nature be indefinite or inaccurate; if they be overcharged with unnecessary ornaments, or seem to be drawn not from his own observation, but from the works of other men, (which are faults common to all bad poets and bad painters) it is evident, that he has no distinct knowledge of nature, or, at least, that he has no talent or taste in imitation. If the sound of his verses offend, as in

Donne and Hobbes, by its harshness; or, as in Waller and Landowne, proceed in one uniform tenor of smoothness, without changing according to the subject, or amusing the ear with those varieties of rhythm and cadence, which the most regular versification admits; it will be supposed, that he writes carelessly, or that he has no true relish for harmonious composition. If, in his comick scenes, he attempt to raise laughter by unnatural exaggeration; which is sometimes done by Sterne and Smollett: if, instead of humour, he obtrude upon you indecent buffoonery; which is frequent in Aristophanes and Rabelais: if, where he intends wit, he can only bring forth common-place jokes, or verbal quibbles; of which I am sorry to say that there is an example or two in Milton: or if, with Congreve and Vanburgh, he endeavour to make crimes and misfortunes matter of merriment; we must believe, either that he has no true sense of ridicule, or that he wilfully debases it, to gratify the taste of the times, or the singularity of his own temper.

But let it be remembered, that the work of an artist is not to be characterised by incidental faults. These may be owing to the weakness of human nature; which in the best men is liable to transgression, in the wisest to error, and in the most attentive to inadvertence. Who can paint nature with the energy of Shakspeare? who so sublime as Homer and Milton? who more elegant than Horace? Yet Shakspeare is not always natural: Homer and Milton may, each of them, furnish more than one example of meanness: and Horace has written some verses that are equally unworthy of a good man and a good poet. If an author abound in beauties, let his blemishes be forgotten. If he give proof of good intention, and discover genius in any department of art or of science, he is entitled to honour. But when he falls continually

into the same sort of fault, and persists in an undertaking which he is unable to execute, he justly incurs the censure of criticism\*.

It must also be remarked, that we ought not to expect, from any performance, a higher degree, or more varieties, of pleasure, than the author intended. Poets, who never attempt great things, may yet excel in elegy and pastoral, and other inferior branches of the art; and nobody blames Theocritus or Tibullus, because they possess not the sublimity of Homer: nay, they would have been really blameable, if they had endeavoured to introduce sublimity into poems that do not admit of it. Every work should be good in its kind; but every kind of work has a sort of goodness peculiar to itself.

Besides: though it is the aim of all the fine arts to give pleasure, by gratifying these Secondary Senses, it ought no less to be the aim of the artist, to promote the love of virtue; which may be done, by displaying the deformity of moral evil, as well as by painting the charms of moral goodness. And therefore, in Satire, and in such other writings, as are intended to move our indignation at vice, offensive images may be allowable. For though in themselves they could not give pleasure, they may yet be approved of, as evidences of good meaning in the author, and as tending to cherish good affections in the reader: even as harsh potions may warrantably be administered, and painful operations of surgery performed, in order to expel disease from the body. Yet, as we blame the physician, who gives more pain to his patient than is necessary; we must also blame the satirist, who, without observing any rule of moderation in this matter, introduces ideas, that are either too indelicate to be used on any occasion, or less delicate than the occasion requires. Flattery and witticism, bandied about from

\* Hor. Ar. Poet. vers. 347—360.



one courtier to another, are objects of satire, no doubt; but, surely, do not amount to a crime so very atrocious, as Pope would insinuate, when he vents his abhorrence of them in the filthiest allusion that ever was written: an allusion, which decency forbids me to transcribe; and of which the author himself supposes his friend to say—

This filthy familie, this beastly line,  
Quite turns my stomach.—

Most of our powers of perception are capable of improvement. The smell of a perfumer; the touch of a polisher; the sight of a painter, who studies the exact visible appearances of things; and the hearing of a blind man, who must often trust to his ear for his preservation; are generally more acute, than the same senses in other men: because they are more exercised, and the informations received by them more carefully attended to. A deviation from the square or the perpendicular is sooner perceived by the architect, or joiner, than by an ordinary eye. Painters, in like manner, improve their ideas of sublimity, beauty, and elegant imitation, by studying the most admired pictures, and the best monuments of antient art. And every musician knows, that, by the practice of musick, our sense of harmony may be improved to a degree, which can hardly be conceived by those, who never cultivated that faculty. Delicacy of taste, in regard to wit and humour, is acquired by the same means. The vulgar are delighted with homely jokes, because they know no better: but one, who is accustomed to elegant conversation, and to the style of polite authors, will soon learn to distinguish between urbanity and rusticity, and undervalue that coarse buffoonery, to which, with less experience, he would perhaps have had no dislike\*.

\* Essay on Poetry and Musick. Part i. chap. 3. Essay on Laughter, chap. 4.

The Secondary Senses are therefore to be improved by the study of nature, and of the best performances in art; and by keeping at a distance from every thing, in art, or in manners, that is inelegant, or indecent.

IV. A fourth requisite to good taste is Sympathy; or that Sensibility of heart, by which, on supposing ourselves in the condition of another, we are conscious in some degree of those very emotions, pleasant or painful, which in a more intense degree would arise within us, if we were really in that condition.

Human pleasures may be divided into those of the body, and those of the soul: the former common to us with the brutes; the latter peculiar to rational beings. Those are of short duration; these more permanent. By the first, an appetite may be gratified; but it is by the last only that we can be made happy.

The fine arts are intended to give pleasure rather to the mind, than to the bodily senses. For though sounds in musick please the ear, and colours in painting the eye, they are little valued, if the soul receive no gratification. Now the human soul cannot be gratified, except by those things that raise in it certain passions or emotions: for a man unsusceptible of passion, who could neither hope nor fear, rejoice nor be sorry, desire nor dislike, would be incapable of happiness. And therefore, it must be the aim of all the fine arts, and of poetry in particular, to convey into the mind such passions, or affections, as bring pleasure along with them.

Tragedy gives pleasure, by infusing pity and imaginary terror, and other elevated emotions: and Comedy, by displaying the follies of mankind in such a light as to provoke contempt and laughter. The Epick poem, like Tragedy, operates upon our sublimer affections; and inspires admiration of what is great, joy in the prosperity of the good, a tender sorrow for the unfortunate; and an agreeable agitation of mind, produced by the vicissitudes of hope  
and

and fear, as they are called forth by the circumstances of the story. True Satire pleases, while it promotes the love of virtue and wisdom; and this it may do, by exposing the crimes of mankind to our indignation, or their follies to ridicule. Lyrick poetry is applicable to a variety of matters, and gives scope to many passions: and these, by a pleasing extravagance in the choice of words and figures, and a peculiar wildness in the composition and harmony, it endeavours to work up to enthusiasm. Even when it paints inanimate nature, Poetry is little esteemed, unless it touch the heart: and an author of sensibility knows, how to select those appearances that are most likely to captivate a reader's fancy, and lead his mind to such thoughts, as may awaken benevolence, piety, contentment, tenderness, admiration, surprize, and other pleasurable emotions\*.

In a word, every thing in poetry ought to be pathetick; that is, capable of moving the passions; not merely such as are melancholy and tender, but our affections in general. So that, if the reader want that gentleness of mind, which I have elsewhere described under the name of Sympathy †, it will be impossible for him to receive any true pleasure from a good poem; however skilled he may be in language and versification, and however well acquainted with the ordinary appearances of nature.

And yet, a defect of this sensibility is not uncommon among the readers of poetry. One is wholly engrossed with the contrivance of the fable; another values nothing but the moral sentiments; a third attends chiefly to the style, and the numbers: I have heard of one, whose sole pleasure in reading Virgil arose from comparing Eneas's voyage with the map; and of another, who could find nothing worth notice in the Georgick, but some precepts of agriculture. But the true poet touches the heart, whatever be his

\* Essay on Poetry and Music. Part i. chap. 3.

† Ibid. chap. 7.

subject:

subject: and the true critick has a heart capable of being touched, with admiration, tenderness, joy, benevolence, piety, patriotism, or any other emotion that the author means to inspire; and of feeling the full effect of his harmony, and of those beautiful or sublime ideas that may adorn his composition.

V. The last thing mentioned as necessary to form good taste, is Judgment, or Good Sense; which is indeed the principal thing; and which some would consider, as comprehending most of the foregoing particulars. By Judgment, I here understand such a constitution of mind, as disposes a man to attend to the reality of things, and qualifies him for knowing and discovering the truth. It is by means of this faculty, as applied in criticism, that we compare poetical imitations with natural objects, so as to perceive in what they resemble, and in what they differ; that we estimate the rectitude of sentiments, the probability of incidents, and whether fictitious characters be similar to those of real life and consistent with themselves, and whether any *part* of a composition be unsuitable to the tendency of the whole. Hence too we discern, with respect to the plan of a work, whether it be simple and natural, or confused and unnatural; and whether the author have been careful to make it, both in the general arrangement, and in the structure of each part, conformable to rule.

Lest this should be misunderstood, I must repeat an observation, which I have elsewhere had occasion to make; that, in almost every art, two sorts of rules have obtained authority; the Essential, and the Ornamental. The former result from the very nature of the work, and are necessary to the accomplishment of the end proposed by the artist. The latter depend rather upon established custom, than upon nature; and claim no higher origin, than the practice of some great performer, whom it has become the fashion to imitate. To violate an *essential* rule, discovers want of sense

in an author, and consequently want of taste: for where sense is not, taste cannot be. To depart from an *ornamental* or mechanical rule, may be consistent with the soundest judgment, and is sometimes a proof both of good taste and of great genius.

Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,  
 And rise to faults true criticks dare not mend:—  
 —From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,  
 And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.

I am the more anxious to mark, and to dwell on this distinction, because the French criticks \* in general seem to have no notion of it. What is contrary to established rule, or to fashion, they condemn as contrary to taste, without enquiring further. The consequence is, that, according to them, French authors only can write in taste, because no other authors write in the French fashion: and Shakespeare's plays must be absurd farces, and their author a barbarian, because they happen to be framed, upon a plan, and in a style, which the criticks of Paris have never acknowledged to be good. Criticism has been thought an entertaining, and useful part, of the philosophy of mind: but, upon this principle, is as much beyond the reach, or below the notice, of rational inquiry, as modes of hair-dressing, or patterns of shoe-buckles.

The following are some of the essential rules of composition, which must not be violated on any account.

1. In Philosophy and History, the strictest regard is to be had to truth, in the detail of facts; and the inferences are to be made according to common sense, and the rules of sound reasoning.

\* I should have said, the French Criticks of the present age. Few nations have produced more learned men than France. I speak here, not of the Stevens, the Daciers, the Rollins, the Fenelons; but of those writers, who have learned from Voltaire to censure because they envy, and to criticize what they do not understand.

2. In works of fiction, a like regard is to be had to probability; and no events are to be introduced, but such as, according to the general opinion of the people to whom they are addressed, may be supposed to happen.

3. Fictitious characters ought to speak and act suitably to their supposed condition, age, rank, and other circumstances; and to the passions, and sentiments, that are said to occupy their minds.

4. External objects are to be described, both in history, and in poetry, as they are found to be in nature. The poet, however, is not obliged to enumerate all their qualities, but those only that are necessary for his purpose.

5. An author's style must always be perspicuous, and fit to convey a full view of his meaning to an attentive reader; and so contrived, as not to hurt, but to please the ear, when it is pronounced. But in every sort of style, the same degree of perspicuity, or of harmony, is not to be expected.

6. Every composition, whether long or short, from an Epick poem or Tragedy, down to a sermon or short essay, ought to have some one end in view; and all its parts must be so disposed, as to promote that end. If it have no end, it has no meaning; if more ends than one, it may confound the attention by its multiplicity: if any of its parts be unserviceable, or repugnant to its final purpose, they are superfluous or irregular, and ought to have been lopped off, or corrected. Of this unity of design, Homer's two poems are perfect models. Each contains a great variety of action, conversation, and adventure: but every thing, in the one, tends to the re-establishment of Ulysses in his kingdom, and, in the other, to display the anger of Achilles, and its lamentable consequences.

7. Every composition ought to have a moral tendency, or at least to be innocent. That mind is perverted, which can either

produce an immoral book, or be pleased with one. Virtue and good taste are so nearly allied, that what offends the former can never gratify the latter.

8. As, in every nation, certain customs of long standing acquire in time the authority of law; so, in every art, there are rules, which, though one might have called them discretionary or indifferent at their first introduction, come at length, after having been invariably observed by the best authors, to be considered as essential. One example will explain this. Homer, who invented, or at least who perfected, Epick poetry, adopted in both his poems that measure of verse which is called Hexameter. That *he* might without blame have adopted another, will hardly be questioned. His choice therefore was arbitrary. But, as it was a lucky choice; and as the practice of Homer became; in this respect, a law to the poets of antiquity; the hexameter is now, and was in the time of Horace \*, and probably long before, held to be indispensable in all Greek and Latin poems of the Epick kind.—For the same reason, partly; and partly, as Aristotle observes, because it is too elaborate, and unlike the cadence of conversation, Hexameter verse would not be tolerated in the Greek or Latin drama; the Iambick, Trochaick, and Anapestick measures, having been adopted, by the best authors, in the antient tragedy and comedy. And, in like manner, if an English author, in an Epick or Dramatick poem, were to attempt any other form of verse, than our Iambick of five feet, he would be thought to transgress a rule, which, though at first a matter of indifference, is now, after having been established by the practice of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and all our great poets, become essential and unalterable.

I shall now give an instance or two, of the ornamental or mechanical laws of composition.

\* Hor. Ar. Poet. vers. 73.

1. That a regular tragedy, or comedy, should consist of five acts, and neither more nor fewer, is a rule, for which it would be difficult to assign any better reason than this, that it has been followed by good authors, and is recommended by Horace. Nor has this rule been invariably followed. The Italian Opera, which, as reformed by Metastasio, is a most beautiful species of Dramatick poem, consists of but three acts: and we have, in English, many good plays, both serious and comical, divided in the same manner; and some of only two acts, and some even of one. It is true, that a dramatick piece ought not to be too long, because it would fatigue the spectator as well as the actor; nor too short, because it would not be sufficiently interesting: it is reasonable too, that some intervals should be allowed in the representation, for the relief both of the players, and of the audience: but that this purpose could not be answered by five intervals, or three, as well as by four, is a point, which I apprehend it would be difficult to prove.

2. Most of the French and Greek tragedians observe *the unities of time and place*: that is, they suppose every part of the action to have happened in the same place, because it is all represented on the same stage; and they limit the time of it to a few hours, because the representation is of no longer continuance. Unity of place is violated, when the scene changes from one place to another, from a house to the street, from the town to the country, or from one town or country to another. Unity of time is broken through, when the incidents of the fable are such, as could not have fallen out within a few hours, or at least within the space of one day and one night.

The observance of these unities may in some cases, no doubt, heighten the probability of the action: but they lay a mighty restraint upon an author's genius; and they may give rise to improbabilities as great as any of those that can be occasioned by the



neglect of them. If the subject of the play be a conspiracy, for example, and the scene of action the street; then, if unity of place be held essential, the conspirators must conduct their affairs in the street, so as to be seen and heard by every body: a very unlikely circumstance, and what, one may venture to say, can never happen. Surely, most audiences would be better pleased, and think the whole more natural, if, on such an emergency, the scene were to change from the street to a private apartment.

The improbabilities, occasioned by disregarding these unities, are not so great as some people imagine. While we sit in the theatre, it is as easy for us to reconcile our minds to the shifting of the scene, from the town to the country, or from one country to another; as it is, at our entrance, to suppose the stage a certain place in Rome or Egypt. And, if we can persuade ourselves, that the player, whom we see, and whose name and person we know, has on a sudden become Cato, or Cæsar, or any other antient hero; we may as well believe, that the evening which we pass in the playhouse comprehends the space of several days or years.

But in fact, there is not, in dramatical representation, that strict probability which the critics talk of. We never mistake the actor for the person whose character he bears; we never imagine ourselves in a foreign country, or carried back into the ages of antiquity: our pleasure is derived from other sources; and from this chiefly, that we know the whole to be a fiction.—The unities of time and place are violated by Shakespeare, in every one of his plays. He often shifts the scene from one country to another: and the time of his action is not always limited to days or weeks, but extends frequently to months, and even to years. Yet these irregularities are not offensive to those who understand him. And hence, I think, we may infer, that the rule, which enjoins the

dramatick poet to a rigid observance of the unities of time and place, is not an essential, but a mechanical rule of composition. \*

As to the improvement of taste in this particular ;—I shall only remark, that whatever tends to correct, and methodise, our knowledge, either of men, or of things, is to be considered as a means of improving the judgment. History, geometry, and grammar ; and those parts of philosophy, which convey clear ideas, and are attended with satisfactory proof, are eminently useful in this respect ;—to which must be added such an acquaintance with life and manners, as fits a man for business and conversation. Idleness, and habits of superficial study, are ruinous to the understanding ; as I have often remarked already, but can hardly repeat too often. And nothing is more detrimental to taste, and to judgment, than those subtleties of antient and modern metaphysics, that encourage verbal controversy, and lead to nothing but doubt and darkness. They exhaust the vigour of the mind to no purpose ; they extinguish the love of good learning ; they withdraw the attention from the concerns of human life, and from those things in art and nature, that warm the heart, and elevate the fancy : they pervert the rational powers, they corrupt good principles, and they poison the sources of human happiness.

Taste, as far as it depends on the knowledge of rules, may be further improved, by reading good books of criticism, and comparing them with the authors whom they illustrate. Sound judgement, however, we must acknowledge to be in a great measure constitutional : and no person will ever acquire true taste, unless nature has made him a man of sense.

So much for *taste in general*, and its improvement. It is scarce necessary to add, because the thing is obvious, that, in order to be

\* See Johnson's Preface to Shakspeare ; and Callabigi's *Dissertazione su le Poesie Drammatiche del S. A. P. Metastasio*.

*completely* skilled in any of those *particular* branches of art, which are subject to the cognizance of this faculty, one must unite theory with practice. None but a painter is a competent judge of painting: no person who has never composed in prose or verse, can be an unexceptionable critick in language and versification: and he who is truly a musical connoisseur must have practised as a musician, and studied the laws of harmony. In every art, certain materials and instruments are employed; and they only, who have handled them, are entitled to decide upon the dexterity of the artist.

Yet, without having been a practitioner, one may acquire such taste in the fine arts, as shall yield a high degree, and a great variety, of entertainment. The pleasures of taste are worthy of our ambition: they are innocent and profitable. He, who employs his leisure in the study of nature and art, is esteemed on that very account; and has many sorts of liberal recreation in his power, which are unknown to those who devote themselves to sensuality, or the pursuit of riches.

But Taste has a further use: it is friendly to virtue\*. Nay, I might, and perhaps I ought to have mentioned the love of virtue

as

\* An artist of the highest eminence, has set this matter in a light so striking and so beautiful, that I shall be excused for transcribing the passage entire. The reader would not thank me, if I were to attempt an abridgement of it.

“ Every establishment that tends to the cultivation of the pleasures of the mind, as distinct from those of sense, may be considered as an inferior school of morality, where the mind is polished and prepared for higher attainments.

“ Let us for a moment take a short survey of the progress of the mind towards what is, or ought to be, its true object of attention. Man, in his lowest state, has no pleasures but those of sense, and no wants but those of appetite. Afterwards, when society is divided into different ranks, and some are appointed to labour for the support of others, those whom their superiority sets free from labour begin to look for intellectual entertainments. Thus, whilst the shepherds were attending their flocks, their masters made the first observations on astronomy: so musick is said to have had its origin from a man at leisure listening to the strokes of a hammer.

“ As

as essential to it. Men of genius have too often employed their talents in corrupting and destroying mankind; but it may be questioned, whether a wicked heart be at all compatible with delicate taste. This will at least serve as a security against those vices that  
debase

“ As the senses, in the lowest state of nature, are necessary to direct us to our support, when that support is once secure, there is danger in following them further. “ To him who has no rule of action but the gratification of the senses, plenty is always “ dangerous. It is therefore necessary to the happiness of individuals, and still more “ necessary to the security of society, that the mind should be elevated to the idea of “ general beauty, and the contemplation of general truth. By this pursuit the mind is “ always carried forward in search of something more excellent than it finds, and “ obtains its proper superiority over the common senses of life; by learning to feel “ itself capable of higher aims, and of nobler enjoyments. In this gradual exaltation “ of human nature, every art contributes its contingent towards the general supply of “ mental pleasure. Whatever abstracts the thoughts from sensual gratifications; what- “ ever teaches us to look for happiness within ourselves, must advance in some measure “ the dignity of our nature.

“ Perhaps there is no higher proof of the excellency of man than this, that to a mind “ properly cultivated whatever is bounded is little. The mind is continually labouring “ to advance, step by step, through successive gradations of excellence, towards perfec- “ tion; which is dimly seen, at a great, though not hopeless, distance; and which we “ must always follow, because we never can attain: but the pursuit rewards itself; one “ truth teaches another; and our store is always increasing, though nature can never “ be exhausted. Our art, like all arts which address the imagination, is applied to “ somewhat a lower faculty of the mind, which approaches nearer to sensuality: but “ through sense and fancy it must make its way to reason; for such is the progress of “ thought, that we perceive by sense, we combine by fancy, and distinguish by reason; “ and, without carrying our art out of its natural and true character, the more we “ purify it from every thing that is gross in sense, in that proportion we advance its use “ and dignity; and, in proportion as we lower it to mere sensuality, we pervert its “ nature, and degrade it from the rank of a liberal art: and this is what every artist “ ought well to remember. Let him remember also, that he deserves just so much “ encouragement in the state, as he makes himself a member of it virtuously useful, “ and contributes in his sphere to the general purpose and perfection of society.

“ The art which we profess has Beauty for its object. This it is our business to “ discover and to express. But the Beauty of which we are in quest is general and “ intellectual. It is an idea that subsists only in the mind: the sight never beheld it,  
“ nor

debase the soul; and, by directing our views to the observation of nature, must frequently lead us to contemplate that Great Being, who is the source of happiness, and the standard of perfection.

It has been said by some, that Taste is wholly capricious; depending, not upon nature or reason, but upon fashion, and the fancies of men. And it is true, that the likings men contract to certain modes of dress and furniture are partly determined by custom, are different in different countries, and in one and the same country are perpetually changing. And that there should be diversities of taste in regard to Beauty, has been shown to be natural: since in our own species, as well as in other things, that will always be the most agreeable, which brings along with it the most agreeable ideas; and supplies, or is connected with, the greatest variety of comforts and pleasures.

Yet in beauty we have seen that there is, and, in all things that admit the distinction of Better and Worse, we may affirm that there is, a standard of excellence; and Taste, as opposed to Caprice, has a real foundation in nature. To be pleased with novelty and imitation; to prefer good pictures to bad, harmony to harshness, and regular shape to distortion: to be gratified with accurate represen-

“ nor has the hand expressed it. It is an idea residing in the breast of the artist, which  
 “ he is always labouring to impart, and which he dies at last without imparting: but  
 “ which he is yet so far able to communicate, as to raise the thoughts and extend the  
 “ views of the spectator; and which, by a succession of art, may be so far diffused,  
 “ that its effects may extend themselves imperceptibly into publick benefits, and be  
 “ among the means of bestowing on whole nations refinement of taste: which, if it  
 “ does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates at least their greatest deprava-  
 “ tion, by disentangling the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts  
 “ through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude  
 “ and harmony, which began by Taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude  
 “ in Virtue.”

Sir Joshua Reynolds. Discourse at the Opening  
 of the Royal Academy, October 15, 1780.

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tations of human manners, especially in that state of primitive simplicity, in which they give a full display of the character: to be interested in a detail of human adventures: to look with delight on the sun, moon, and stars, the expanse of heaven, grand and regular buildings, huge rocks and cataracts, the scenery of groves and rivers, mountains and the ocean, the flowers and verdure of summer, and the pure splendour of winter snow:—is surely natural to every reasonable being, who has leisure to attend to these things, and is in any degree enlightened by learning or by contemplation. For this last clause must never be omitted; because, as I formerly observed, we cannot perceive at all without percipient faculties, nor accurately without improved faculties. \*

If it be denied, that these, and the like appearances in art and nature, have any intrinsic charm; for that other habits of education might have made us look upon them with indifference, or with disgust: I shall only ask, whence it comes, that the poems of every age and nation, which were certainly made for the purpose of pleasing, should abound in descriptions of these and the like objects; and why the fine arts have always been a matter of general attention in all civilized countries.

Truth is allowed to be uniform and unchangeable: yet what can be more absurd, than many of those opinions are, which have passed in the world for true! Was not the philosophy of Des Cartes admired, long after that of Newton was made publick? nay, in some parts of Europe, is not the former still considered as the true system? The existence of matter has been denied by one set of philosophers; that of motion, by another; that of spirit by a third; and that of every thing, by a fourth. How many theories of human nature have appeared, and disappeared, within

\* See above, page 141.

these hundred years! What endless varieties of opinion among lawyers, and divines, physicians, and moralists! Nay, have we not seen, even in our days, the greatest of all intellectual depravities, a depravity whereof the devil himself is not capable, I mean atheism, patronised by some vain and worthless beings of the human form! Yet it will not be said, by any intelligent creature, that theological, philosophical, and moral truths are all destitute of foundation, or depend wholly upon fashion, and the fancies of men.

If, then, in regard to matters that admit of clear proof, ignorance, affectation, and error may prevail for a time among those, from whom better things might be expected; need we wonder, that bad taste should sometimes prevail; and Blackmore be preferred to Milton, Lucan to Virgil, and Pliny to Cicero?—But, whatever temporary infatuations may take place in the world of literature; simplicity and true taste sooner or later gain the ascendant, and prove their rectitude by their permanency. To the general suffrage of mankind if we were to oppose the cavils of Zoilus, Bavius, and Mevius, would Homer and Virgil lose any of their reputation? No. They were thought the greatest of poets two thousand years ago: they are thought so still, by all who understand them: nor can we conceive it possible, while nature remains unaltered, that the time will ever come, when they shall be considered as bad, or even as indifferent writers.

## C H A P. V.

## The subject of Imagination resumed. Some directions for the Regulation of it.

**I**T was formerly remarked, that upon associations formed by accident, and established by custom, many of the pains and pleasures of life depend. It may now be affirmed, in more comprehensive terms, that our happiness is peculiarly affected by whatever affects Imagination; and that, therefore, the right government of this faculty must be a matter of the greatest importance to all men. Some rules were proposed, for preventing those perverse associations, that disturb the tranquillity of mankind, by making them superstitious in regard to dreams, omens, ghosts, and the like. I shall now offer a few directions of a more general nature, which may be of use for the further regulation of this capricious faculty.

The Imagination stands most in need of restraint, when it runs into one or other of the opposite extremes of Levity and Melancholy. The first is incident to youth; the second, to manhood and old age. The latter is more fatal to happiness than the former; but both are attended with much evil.

I. Those minds, which are most in danger from Levity of imagination, are of a joyous or sanguine temperature, with a great share of vanity, and apt on all occasions to amuse themselves with the hope of success, and of higher felicity, than men have reason to look for in this world. They are the dupes of the flatterer; and misinterpret common civilities for compliments paid to their



superiour merit. History, philosophy, and simple nature suit not their taste: but those romances they greedily devour, which contain delusive pictures of happiness, or incredible exaggerations of calamity. They form a thousand schemes of conduct, few of which can be reduced to practice; and look down with contempt on those plodding mortals, who, having only good sense to guide them, and disclaiming all extravagant hopes, aim at nothing beyond the common pursuits of life.

As a person of this character is generally happy, at least for a time, in his own folly, it may seem impertinent to endeavour to lay before him lessons of wisdom. For these, if they have any good effect at all, must depreciate him in his own eyes, and so deprive him of many an exquisite gratification. Yet, when it is considered, that such levity seldom fails, sooner or later, to make him contemptible; exposes him to disappointments, the more severe, because unforeseen; dissipates, in an endless variety of idle schemes, those talents which, if properly directed, might have been of use; and often, by cherishing pride, betrays him into such behaviour towards others, as may justly provoke their dislike:—when, I say, we consider, that these and other evils may flow from this levity, it will be thought, not cruelty, but kindness, to propose a cure for it.

The cure may be presumed to be in some forwardness, when you have instilled into the patient a love of nature, and of truth. With this view, let him study geometry, and history, and those parts and systems of philosophy, which recommend benevolence, and a lowly mind, and lead to the observation of life and manners. Flatterers and romances must be banished for ever; or, if any of the last are to be tolerated, let them be such, as paint the pursuits and fortunes of mankind with simplicity and truth, and have no tendency to inflame appetite, or encourage wild expectation. The

importance of mechanick arts to the publick weal; and how respectable even in the lowest rank are honesty and industry; and what wretchedness must ever attend the efforts of fantastick ambition; are topicks, that cannot be too earnestly inculcated.

It will be a lucky circumstance, if he often fall into the company of those, who are wiser than himself: for, in this case, if he be not entirely blinded by self-conceit, he must form comparisons, which will at once mortify his vanity, and teach him to have a due respect for other men. But, if he keep aloof from such companions, and prefer the society of his inferiours and admirers, (which is a common symptom of that mental disease whereof I speak) there is scarce any hope of his amendment; his admiration of himself, and contempt for the rest of the world, will harden into such a habit, as adversity itself will scarce have power to unsettle. Adversity is indeed a severe monitor: but no other is so effectual in promoting that knowledge of one's self, which is the parent of humility; or that fellow-feeling of the infirmities of other men, which melts the heart into forbearance and goodwill, and restrains the sallies of intemperate passion, and the flights of unruly fancy.

The habit of turning every thing into joke and ridicule, is another dangerous levity of imagination. It is so far allied to the former, as to derive its origin from vanity; for no man will persist in it, who has not a very high opinion of his own talents.

Cicero well observes, that “ man seems to have been destined  
 “ rather for serious than for ludicrous purposes. Sport, says he,  
 “ and jocularities are indeed allowable, like sleep, and other relaxa-  
 “ tions; but it is only after we have discharged our duty in matters  
 “ of importance.” \* Wit and humour, when natural, are enter-  
 taining and useful: they enliven conversation, and endear human

\* De Off. lib. i. cap. 29.

creatures to one another; and are often of singular advantage in discountenancing vice and folly: and he who has a genius in this way needs not take pains to show it, for it will break out of its own accord. But they, who are continually aiming at wit, and think by so doing to render themselves acceptable to every company, little know, how often their pleasantry gives offence; and that the smile, which they look for, and perhaps obtain, is more frequently owing to complaisance, than to approbation. In fact, nothing is more teasing than impertinent jocularities: and few artifices are sooner detected, or more heartily despised, than theirs are, who endeavour to pass upon us for natural, that wit, which is the effect of recollection and study.

A parody of a short poem is often amusing: but one's mind must be in some degree perverted, before one can, without general dissatisfaction, and frequent fits of disgust, go through the whole of Scarron's, or even the two books of Cotton's, *Virgil Travesti*. And the impression that such things, when long continued, leave on the mind, is by no means desirable. To see wit misemployed, and what is sublime, or instructive, degraded and misrepresented, not in a slight effort of gaiety, but with perseverance and toil, suggests the idea, rather of malice, than of playfulness. It might raise a good-humoured smile, to clap a hat and wig, for a moment, on the bust of Socrates or Cicero: but if a statuary were to labour a year, in preparing such implements of marble, with a view to fix them on those venerable brows, we should hardly pay any compliment either to his heart, or to his fancy.—Besides, parodies, when far prosecuted, are never free from indecency: and if he, who at any time assumes the character of a buffoon, does not speedily lay it aside, his conduct is in danger of becoming immoral, as well as incongruous.

Another

Another evil, resulting, as a natural consequence, from this levity of mind, is the profanation of things sacred. The habitual joker spares nothing. The phraseology of Scripture, and the doctrines of religion, serve him occasionally as funds of merriment: which not only depraves his own mind, and both intoxicates and poisons imagination; but also makes his pleasantries a nuisance to the wise, and a snare to the simple.—But of the danger of connecting ludicrous ideas with solemn truths, I have already spoken more than once.

He who understood, better than any other writer, the nature and province of true humour, is Addison. Let those, therefore, who wish to be fully instructed in this matter, study him; and learn the theory from his practice. In his mirth, there is nothing profane or impertinent. He is perfectly serious, where he ought to be so: and his smiles, like those of innocence, though irresistibly captivating, are ever inoffensive. He is not, some think, a profound philosopher; for he is always clear and harmonious, rational, manly, and interesting. But if writing be good, in proportion as it is useful; and if its noblest use be, to improve the heart, refine the taste, and sweeten the temper, Addison is of all uninspired authors, at least in prose, the best, and the most delightful.

II. A *gloomy* Imagination, when it grows unmanageable, is a dreadful calamity indeed. In this forlorn condition, a man not only feels the extremes of anxiety and fear, but is apt to fancy, that his conscience, and every power of heaven and earth, are combined against him. Folly is a weakness of understanding: but this kind of phrensy, which mistakes its own ideas for realities, has oft been the lamentable portion of those, who, in the common affairs of life, and indeed on every topick, except that which discomposed them, could speak and think with propriety.

Rational

Rational remonstrance, opposed to this malady, has rarely any good effect. The disordered fancy of the unhappy sufferer makes him adopt absurd principles; which, however, as he thinks them warranted by the evidence of sense or memory, it is not in the power of argument to remove:—while his reasoning faculties are often wonderfully acute. Besides, his nervous system, too sensible already, is by such opposition irritated more and more: and any superiority, which he may think he has gained in the dispute, serves only to confirm his notions, and perpetuate his disease.

This calamity is then the most deplorable, when it is connected with religious terror. If the patient apprehend injury, or think he has received any, from his fellow-creatures, indignation will give vigour to his mind; and he may now and then derive a gloomy pleasure from the contemplation of his own innocence, and of that sagacity, wherewith he fondly imagines that he shall disappoint, and avenge himself of, the adversary. But if the state of his mind be such, as leads him to fear the worst evils both here and hereafter, all consolation is at an end; and the night of despair closes round him on every side.

The cure of this distemper, as it affects both soul and body, belongs equally to the physician and to the moralist; who prescribe medicine and exercise, to remove obstructions and evil humours from the corporeal part; and a hurry of business or amusement, to force the mind to exert itself in a new direction. But this, like many other maladies, it is more easy to prevent, than to cure. Let me, therefore, recommend the following preventives, for regulating, not our fancy only, but our passions, and moral nature in general. For the passions and imagination mutually affect each other; and the same rules will serve for the government of both.

First.

First. Let our general course of life be active, social, and temperate. Indolence and solitude sound prettily in pastoral poems; but we were made for fellowship, and labour: and if we give ourselves up to idleness, or abandon the society of our fellow-creatures, our lives will be unnatural, and therefore unhappy. Nothing gives so pleasing a variety to life, as Action; and nothing so effectually dissipates painful thoughts, as the countenance and conversation of a friend. Nor with our friends only should we associate: the company of strangers may be of singular use, in sweetening our tempers, and refining our manners. For this requires a more than ordinary attention to all the civilities of social intercourse; it forces the mind into new exertions, which prevent that stagnation of the faculties, whereby the fancy is corrupted; it amuses, by offering to our notice a variety of new characters and incidents; and, if we study to make ourselves agreeable, which is nothing more than our duty, it is beneficial to our worldly interest, by extending our acquaintance and influence. — The fruits of Sobriety are health, gladness, governable passions, clear discernment, rectitude of opinion, the esteem of others, and long life; which, with an approving conscience, are the greatest blessings here below, and, in all common cases, an effectual security against a diseased imagination.

Secondly. Let us cherish every benevolent and cheerful affection; good-nature, good-humour, forgiveness, candour, and a disposition to think favourably, or charitably at least, of every body; declining law-suits, controversy, and contention of every kind, which give much present uneasiness, and, by wearing out the spirits, promote melancholy and dissatisfaction. Repress immoderate anxiety, resentment, and sorrow, which enfeeble the mind, and disqualify it for happiness: when any one thought recurs too often, especially if it be accompanied with disagreeable emotions, endeavour

your with all your might to get rid of it: and avoid, as you would the pestilence, those unnatural passions of envy, suspicion, and jealousy, which often bring phrensy along with them, and present nothing to the imagination, but blood, darkness, and furies.

Misanthropy is itself a sort of madness: reject with horror every thought, and every book, that tends to encourage it. If generous motives will not prevail, let the fate of Swift deter us from this infernal disposition. Swift had learning, genius, wit, humour, renown, and the friendship of many distinguished persons: but his misanthropy was unbounded, and grew more and more virulent, as he advanced in years; till at last it plunged him into a state of wretchedness, than which there is nothing on record more deplorable.

Pride, too, is the bane of happiness, as well as of virtue, and is very apt to disorder the imagination. Indeed it has been observed, that phrensy is more frequently owing to pride, and to vanity, than to any other moral cause; and that a lowly and contented mind is not often in danger from that terrible disease. As it is from pride and vanity that self-conceit takes its rise, we ought to be particularly jealous of ourselves, and to consider it as a dangerous symptom, when we are unwilling to hear advice, and differ in opinion from the rational part of mankind. This shows, that all is not right in the understanding: and when that is depraved in any degree, it is no wonder, that the fancy should be in the same degree unmanageable.

Thirdly. To prevent that melancholy, which is the effect of a distempered imagination, it will be further necessary, especially for literary men who are liable to be haunted with this disease, to pursue those studies only, which are amusing, practical, and useful; whereof there is a sufficiency to fill up every leisure hour of life. And let all those be avoided, that cherish evil passions.—Such is

metaphysical controversy; which for the most part ends in dissatisfaction and disappointment.—Such are the misanthropical writings of Hobbes, Rochefoucault, and Mandevil; wherein human nature is most injuriously represented as a vile composition of selfishness, malignity, and pride.—Such are many of the satires of Swift; which appear to have little else in view, than to create a mutual abhorrence between the two sexes; and to disunite society, by making every man suspicious of his neighbour.—Such are the dreams of our modern Epicureans; who describe man as a sort of beast by nature, and insinuate, that he is in nothing superiour to other animals, unless in being more docile, and more prone to mischief.—And such, without exception, are all those writings, that favour infidelity and atheism; whereof, to the disgrace of the times, more have appeared in this, than in any former age: a circumstance, that we shall be at no loss to account for, if we consider the dissipation, the petulant wit, the false refinements, and the total neglect of good learning, by which some parts of Europe are now so infamously distinguished. To a man educated in Christian principles, and not corrupted by affectation or debauchery, nothing can give keener anguish, or overwhelm the mind with a deeper gloom, than to be perplexed with doubts concerning that futurity which is the foundation of his dearest hopes.

There is another sort of books, of a very different character, abounding in good sentiments, and written by persons of the greatest worth, from which, notwithstanding, it will be prudent for him to abstain, whose imagination is apt to dwell upon melancholy ideas. Such are some of those tragedies, and tragical novels (whereof I mention only the *Revenge*, by Young, and The history of *Clarissa*, by Richardson) that wear out the spirits with a succession of horrors and sorrows: and such, though a work that does  
honour



honour to literature, is a great part of *The Night-thoughts*. These gloomy compositions are captivating to young people: for, in youth, the spirits are high, and misfortune and sorrow are novelties. But they may store the mind with mournful ideas, which afterwards, in certain disorders of the human frame, one would fain get rid of: and therefore I think they should be but sparingly indulged in, by persons of a delicate constitution and great sensibility. To the vain, however, and the giddy, they may be of great benefit; for their sensibility is not easily wounded; and to them we may presume it is, and not to those who are already broken-hearted, that the wise man addresses himself, when he says, “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting;—for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.”

It may seem, in these days, an unnecessary advice; and yet I should not do justice to my subject, if I did not recommend moderate application to the studious in general, and to those of them chiefly whose fancy has become ungovernable from a depression of mind. I will not, however, enter upon a detail of the miseries that take their rise from excessive study. Tissot has written an elegant book on the subject; but let it not be recommended to every one's perusal; for the cases recorded by that author are so many, and so dreadful, as would go near to frighten the valetudinary student out of his wits. I shall only remark, that too much study will in time shatter the strongest nerves, and make the soul a prey to melancholy. The want of air and exercise, with interrupted digestion, unhinges the bodily frame: and the mind, long and violently exerted in one direction, like a bow long bent, loses its elasticity, and, unable to recover itself, remains stupidly fixed in the same distorted posture. One set of ideas are then continually before it; which, being always of the disagreeable kind,

bring along with them an unvaried interchange of horror and sorrow. When it is thus far advanced, the disorder is alarming. Study must be altogether relinquished; or at least all those studies, that are either severe, or in any way related, in their objects, or method of procedure, to those that occasioned the malady: and new employments must be contrived to force the mind out of its old gloomy tract, into a path more chearful and less difficult.

If therefore persons of a delicate frame should at any time think it their duty to engage in laborious speculation, they will do well to make their daily task short; and, from the moment they lay aside their papers to-day, till they resume them to-morrow, not once to think of the matter: employing the interval in chearful company, or in exercise, or in reading poetry, history, books of travels, and such like writings, that gratify the mind with a variety of images, and yet require no intellectual exertion. In these circumstances, musick is very salutary; and some of the best romances of the comick kind may be read with advantage. Botany, too, is an useful recreation to the studious; as it leads them to the fields; and so gives them at once fresh air, gentle exercise, and liberal amusement. But, of all occupations, agriculture is the most natural; the most friendly to the soul and to the body of man; and the most beneficial to society.

In some countries, every young man is obliged to learn a mechanic art. It is recorded of one Achmet, a Turkish emperor, that he was a maker of those ivory rings, which the Turks wear on their thumbs when they shoot their arrows. We find in Homer, that Ulysses, though a king and a hero, was an expert joiner, and a tolerable shipwright. I have often wished, that this practice were more general. It would at least be of great advantage to those who follow a learned profession, and would prevent many of the evils incident to a thoughtful and sedentary life. Let us not be  
ashamed

ashamed or averse, to ply the ax or chissel, or the hammer, and the anvil. If we acquire a dexterity in any healthy mechanic exercise, which one may do in a perfect consistency with literary ambition, we shall possess an inexhaustible fund of recreation; and, in order to unbend the mind after the fatigue of study, shall not be obliged to join in those dangerous amusements, that give scope to malevolent or inflammatory passions.

Lastly, let those, who wish to preserve their imagination in a chearful and healthy state, cultivate piety, and guard against superstition; by forming right notions of God's adorable being and providence, and cherishing the correspondent affections of love, veneration, and gratitude. Superstition is fierce and gloomy: but true Christianity gives glory to the Divine nature, and is most comfortable to the human. It teaches, that nothing happens, but by the permission of Him, who is greatest, wisest, and best; that the adversities which befall us may all be improved into blessings; that man is indeed a sinful creature, but that God has graciously provided for him the means both of pardon, and of happiness; that, if we obey the Gospel, than which no system of doctrine can be more excellent in itself, or supported by better evidence, "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us an eternal weight of glory;" for that, when these transitory scenes disappear, an endless state of things will commence, wherein Virtue shall triumph, and all her tears be wiped away for ever: wherein there will be as much felicity, as the most exalted benevolence can desire, and no more punishment, than the most perfect justice will approve.—He who believes all this, and endeavours to act accordingly, must look upon the calamities of life as not very material; and, while he retains the command of his faculties, may have continually present to his imagination the most sublime, and most

most transporting views, that it is possible for a human being either to wish for, or to comprehend.

The Divine Omnipotence ought at all times to inspire us with veneration and holy fear. By the simplest means, or without any means, it can accomplish the most important purposes. This very faculty of Imagination, the Deity can make, to each of us, even in this world, the instrument of exquisite happiness, or consummate misery; by setting before it the most glorious objects of hope, or the most tremendous images of despair. What a blessing are cheerful thoughts, and a sound imagination! and what man can say, that his imagination and thoughts are always, or indeed at any time, in his own power! Let us, therefore, learn humility; and seek the Divine favour above all things. And, while we endeavour to make a right use of the rules he has prescribed, or given us grace to discover, for purifying and improving our nature, let us look up for aid to Him, whose influence alone can render them successful.

## OF DREAMING.\*

**N**ATURE does nothing in vain. But, from the imperfection of our knowledge, we often mistake final causes, and are too apt to pronounce that useless, of which we do not perceive the use: which is not less absurd in many cases, than if a man born blind were to deny the utility of light, or the beauty of colour. In the shop of a watchmaker, or of any artist who employs himself in complex mechanism, how many wheels are there, and pegs, and utensils, whereof a clown cannot conceive to what purpose they are to be applied! How many parts are there of the human body, which anatomists only can explain! and how many, which the most learned of that profession cannot fully account for! Shall we therefore imagine, that any of those parts are superfluous, or useless?

A king in Spain is said to have censured the arrangement of the planetary system; impiously asserting, that he could have made a more regular world himself. His presumption, we know, was the effect of ignorance: he took upon him to find fault with that which he did not understand. Had he known the true astronomy, he must have been overwhelmed with astonishment, at the regularity, with which the heavenly bodies perform their revolutions.

In fact, the more we understand nature, the more we admire it. And when, among the works of God, any thing occurs, of which we perceive not the necessity, or the propriety, it becomes us humbly to confess our ignorance. For what are we, that we should presume to cavil at the dispensations of infinite wisdom!

\* Extracts from this discourse were printed in a periodical paper called *The Mirror*. The whole is here given, as it was at first composed.

Man's knowlege is progressive. How many things are known to us, which were unknown to the antients! What at present seems of little value may hereafter be found to be of the greatest. Many countries are uninhabited now, which before the end of the world may support millions of human creatures, and give rise to new arts and sciences, and other wonderful inventions.

These remarks we ought never to lose sight of, in philosophical inquiry; especially, when we are at a loss to explain final causes. Our knowlege of these will always be in proportion to our knowlege of nature. For, if we be in any degree ignorant of the form and structure of a thing, we must in the same degree be ignorant of the end for which it was made, and the uses to which it may be applied. Were it required of us, to find out the use of a machine, which we had never before seen or heard of; the first thing we should do would be, to examine its nature, that is, the form, connections, and tendency of its several parts. If we will not take the trouble to do this, or if we have not mechanical skill to qualify us for it, what title have we to affirm, that the machine is uselefs, or imperfect? As well may a blind man find fault with my complexion, or a deaf man condemn a symphony of musical instruments.

Though there are not many natural appearances more familiar to us than DREAMING, there are few which we less understand. It is a faculty, or an operation of our minds, of which we can hardly say, whether or not it be subservient, either to action, or to knowlege. But we may be assured, it is not without its uses, though we should never be able to discover them.

I shall not trouble the reader with the opinions of the antients, in regard to the immediate cause of Dreaming. Epicurus fancied, that an infinite multitude of subtle images; some flowing from bodies, some formed in the air of their own accord, and others made up of

different things variously combined, are always moving up and down around us: and that these images, being of extreme fineness, penetrate our bodies, and, striking upon the mind, give rise to that mode of perception which we call Imagination, and to which he refers the origin both of our dreams, and of our thoughts when we are awake. Aristotle seems to think, that every object of sense makes, upon the human soul, or upon some other part of our frame, a certain impression; which remains for some time after the object that made it is gone; and which, being afterwards recognized by the mind in sleep, gives rise to those visionary images that then present themselves.—These opinions, if one were to examine them, would be found, either to amount to nothing that can be understood; or to ascribe to human thought a sort of material or bodily nature, which to me is perfectly inconceivable.\*

Neither shall I take up time, with enumerating five different species of Dreams, acknowledged by some antient philosophers, and particularly described by Macrobius †. Dreams are indeed of different sorts and characters; but I see no reason, why they may not be divided into fifty classes, as well as into five.

Without attempting to explore the *efficient* cause of this phenomenon, which it is probable we shall never come to the knowledge of; I shall content myself with making a few unconnected remarks upon it, chiefly with a view to point out its *final* cause; and to obviate those superstitions in regard to it, which have sometimes troubled weak minds. I mean not to be positive in what I suggest; for, on a subject like this, in which our experience can never be accurate, because the phenomena never occur, but when we are almost incapable of observation, our knowledge can hardly be supposed to rise higher than conjecture.

\* See Essay on Memory, chapter ii. section 1.

† Som. Scip. lib. i. cap. 3.

1. My first remark is, that Dreaming, though common, is not universal among mankind. Locke tells us of a person of his acquaintance, who never dreamed till the twenty-sixth year of his age, when he happened to have a fever, and then dreamed for the first time. Agreeably to which, Aristotle observes, that those, who never dream till they be grown up, are generally liable, soon after their first experience in this kind, to some change in the bodily constitution, tending either to death, or to sickness\*. Plutarch mentions one Cleon, his friend, who lived to be old, and never dreamed once in his life; and says, he had heard the same thing reported of Thrasymedes †. I myself know a gentleman, who never dreams, but when his health is disordered. And it is generally acknowledged, that some people are not often conscious of dreaming, and that there are many who always dream when they sleep.

Those philosophers, who maintain that the soul thinks always, will have it, that in sleep we dream always; and that, if we ever imagine otherwise, it is only because we forget our dreams. This is just saying, in order to support a theory, that a thing may have happened whereof we have no evidence, and that may not have happened of which we have evidence. That all men should dream equally, notwithstanding that some are always conscious of it, and some never; notwithstanding that we dream, sometimes a great deal, and at other times very little; is a position that cannot be admitted, if experience is a rational ground of knowledge. I may therefore repeat, that Dreaming, though common, is not universal.

\* Arist. Hist. anim. lib. iv. cap. 10.

† De Orac. sub fin — Pliny speaks of a whole nation in the remote parts of Africa (he calls them Atlantes) who never dream: but it is in the same chapter in which he mentions the Troglodytes, who dwell in caves, and live on the flesh of serpents; the Egipanes, whose form is the same with that of the God Pan; and the Blemmyes, whose eyes and mouth (for they have no head) are in the breast. Nat. Hist. v. 8.



But I only mention the fact, without pretending to account for it. And I have nothing else to say about it, but this, that probably Dreaming is not equally necessary to all constitutions. Dreams give to human thoughts a variety, which (as will be observed by and by) may be useful to some minds as an amusement, but not to all, or at least not to all in an equal degree. As some bodies require less food, and less sleep, than others; so some minds may have more, and others less, need of dreams, as a recreation.

2. In dreams, we mistake our thoughts for real things. While the dream lasts, it appears a reality; at least it generally does: but the moment we awake, we are conscious, that the whole was imaginary, and that our waking perceptions, and they only, are real, and such as may be depended on.

Some writers, who affect to disbelieve the existence of body, and maintain that we never perceive any thing but the ideas of our own minds, have urged this as an argument in favour of their theory. "If we be imposed on by our dreams," say they, "why not by our sensations, when awake? If ideas in sleep affect us in the same way as bodily objects, may not those things which we now take for bodily objects be really ideas, and nothing more?" This reasoning, if it could prove any thing, would prove too much. If we be so far imposed on by our sensations, when awake, as to mistake an idea for a body, that is, one sort of object for another which is totally different and unlike; we may be so far imposed on, by our faculties in general, as to mistake black for white, vice for virtue, and truth for falsehood. And, if this be allowed, it follows, that our senses and understanding are fallacious faculties; that by the law of our nature we are compelled to believe what is not true; that the Almighty Being, who made us, meant to deceive us, and yet that we have sagacity to see through the deception; and, therefore, that we ought not, and rationally cannot, believe any

thing whatever, nor even admit any one proposition to be more probable than any other: which is Pyrrhonism in the extreme, and at once puts an end to all science, and overturns every human principle.

But in fact, the delusions of dreaming, notwithstanding their frequency, never affect the assurance of our conviction, or the certainty of our knowledge. While sleep lasts, we may mistake a dream for a reality; but no waking man in his senses ever mistook a reality for a dream. The law of our nature determines us, whether we will or not, to believe, that what we perceive, when awake, is real; and that what we remember to have dreamed, when asleep, is not real, but imaginary. There is no need of arguments to enforce conviction. That I at this moment am awake, and not asleep, is self-evident. I cannot prove it; because I know nothing more evident, to prove it by: neither can I disbelieve it. Such is the law of rational, or at least of human, nature. Nor is my belief in this case less necessary, than the effect of those physical laws that operate upon my body. I could no more bring myself to believe, that I am now asleep, and that what I see around me is a dream, than I could by an effort of my will suspend my body in the air, or make it gravitate upwards to the clouds\*.

Aristotle remarks †, and every person must have observed, that in sleep we sometimes fancy, among other things, that our dream is only a dream. But this is not so common. It holds true for the most part, that in dreams we mistake ideas, or thoughts, for real external objects, and are affected by them in nearly the same manner. Only, when we look back upon a dream, we seem to remember a particular confusedness of perception, which has no place in our feelings, when we are awake. But this we are not

\* See an Essay on Truth. Part ii. chap. 2. sect. 2.

† Arist. de Insom. cap. 3.

always sensible of, while the dream continues. It is a circumstance that attends the recollection of our dreams.

3. Though some of our dreams are very extravagant, others are more regular, and not unlike real life. When the mind is at ease, and the body in health, we often dream of our ordinary business\*. The passions, too, that occupy the mind when awake, and the objects and causes of those passions, are apt to recur in sleep, though for the most part under some disguise; accompanied with painful circumstances, when we are in trouble, and with more pleasing ideas when we are happy.

The poets attend to this; and, in describing the dreams of their heroes and heroines, are careful to give them a resemblance to their real fortune. Dido, when forsaken by Eneas, dreams, that she is going a long journey alone, and seeking her Tyrians in a desert land:

—— longum, incomitata, videtur,

Ire viam, Tyriosque deserta quærere terra.

thus uniting, in one image of melancholy distress, the two passions that engrossed her through the day, love to her people, and a sense of her forlorn condition.—Eloisa, separated for ever from her friend, dreams of being again happy in his company: but the next moment, says she,

\* Et quoi quisque fere studio devinctus adhæret,  
Aut quibus in rebus multum sumus ante morati,  
Atque in qua ratione fuit contenta magis mens,  
In somnis eadem plerumque videmur obire:  
Causidici, causas agere, et componere leges;  
Induperatores, pugnare, ac prælia obire;  
Nautæ, contractum cum ventis cernere bellum:  
Nis agere hoc autem, et naturam quærere rerum  
Semper, et inventam patriis exponere chartis.

Lucretius. iv. 959.

Methinks,

Methinks, we wandering go  
 Through dreary wastes, and weep each others woe ;  
 Where round some mouldering tower pale ivy creeps,  
 And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.  
 Sudden you mount ; you beckon from the skies :  
 Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.

On these occasions, the poet will not describe a dream exactly like the real circumstances of the dreamer: he makes it only a sort of dark allegorical similitude. And this we approve of; because we know it is according to nature.

For a reason to be given in the sequel, it will appear to be mercifully ordered by Providence, that our dreams should thus *differ* from our waking thoughts. And, from what we know of the influence of our passions upon the general tenor of our thinking, we need not wonder, that there should be, notwithstanding, some *analogy* between them. It is this mixture of resemblance and diversity, that makes many of our dreams *allegorical*. But, when that happens, an attentive observer, who is free from superstition, will find, that they allude, not to what is future, but to what is present, or past; unless we have been anticipating some future event; in which case, our dreams may possibly resemble our conjectures. Now if our conjectures were right, and if our dreams be like them, it may happen, that there shall be a resemblance between a dream and a future occurrence. But in this, there is nothing more supernatural, than that I should dream to-night of what I have been employed in to-day. For this is nothing more, than a particular train of thought, impressed upon us in sleep, by a certain *previous* train of thought, into which reason and experience had led us when awake.

For

For example: When I see a man dissipating his fortune, I may, with reason, apprehend, that poverty will soon overtake him. If this conjecture trouble me in the day-time, it may also recur in sleep, accompanied with some visionary circumstances; and I shall dream, perhaps, that I see him in rags and misery. Suppose this to happen soon after, what opinion am I to entertain concerning my dream? Surely, I have no more reason to consider it as prophetic, than to look upon the conjecture which gave rise to it as the effect of inspiration.

Some of our dreams bear little or no resemblance to any thing that ever before occurred to our senses or fancy. But this is not common, except in bad health. It holds true in general, that dreams are an imitation, though often a very extravagant one, of reality.

There are people, who observe, that one particular dream frequently returns upon them. Socrates, in the *Phedo* of Plato, says, that he had all his life been haunted with a vision of this kind, in which one seemed to exhort him to study musick. If this repetition of dreams be, as is likely enough, the effect of habit: if I dream the same thing a second, and a third, time, in consequence of having thought or spoken of it, after I first dreamed it: we may hence learn the expediency of concealing disagreeable dreams, and banishing them from our thoughts as soon as we can. Indeed, it is a vulgar observation, that they who never speak of dreams are not often troubled with them.

Intemperance of every kind, in eating or drinking, in sleep or watching, in rest or exercise, tends to make dreams disagreeable: and therefore, one end of dreaming may be, to recommend temperance and moderation. For the time we employ in sleep bears a great proportion to the whole of human life; and, if there be any expedient for rendering that part of time agreeable, it is surely worth

worth while to put it in practice. Habits of virtue and sobriety; the repression of turbulent desires; and the indulgence of pious, social, and cheerful dispositions, are, for the most part, effectual in giving that lightness to the animal spirits, and that calm temperature to the blood, which promote pleasurable thoughts through the day, and sweet slumber and easy dreams by night.

The ancients thought, that morning dreams come nearest the truth. In the morning, no doubt, the perspiration and digestion continued through the night will make the stomach, and the whole frame of the body, more composed and cool, than when we go to sleep: and hence, perhaps, it is not absurd to say, that dreams may be more regular than, and more like real life. But, if we have passed the earlier hours of the morning without sleep, and fall a dozing about the time we usually rise, our dreams are seldom agreeable, and our slumber is rather stupefying than salutary: whence we may reasonably suppose it to be the intention of nature, that we should rise early, and at a stated hour.

4. As agreeable thoughts accompany good health; as violent passions, and even phrensy, are the effect of certain diseases; as dulness, and confusion of thought, may be occasioned by a loaded stomach; and as the swallowing of much strong liquor produces a temporary madness:—as our thoughts, I say, when we are awake, are so much determined by our bodily habit, it is no wonder, that they should be still more liable to such influence when we are asleep. Accordingly, certain dreams do, for the most part, accompany certain positions and states of the body. When our breathing is in any degree interrupted, by the head falling awry, by the bed-clothes pressing on the mouth and nostrils, or by any internal disorder, we are apt to dream of going, with great uneasiness, through narrow passages, where we are in danger of suffocation. When the state of the stomach and bowels occasions any convulsive motion

in the jaws, a thing not uncommon in sleep, and which frequently produces a strong compression and grinding of the teeth, we are apt to dream, that our teeth are loose, or falling out, or that our mouth is full of pins, or of something very disagreeable. In cold weather too, when by any accident we throw aside the bed-cloaths, we dream perhaps of going naked. Aristotle observes, that in sleep a weak impression made on an organ of sense may make us dream of a strong impression; and that a strong impression may make us dream of a weak one\*. A slight warmth in the feet, he says, if in any degree greater than ordinary, will sometimes cause us to dream of walking on burning coals; and the crowing of a cock heard in sleep will seem fainter, than if we had heard it at the same distance when awake.

Of all these facts I have had experience. And here we discover one source of the great variety of dreams. And, if the thing could be accurately attended to, I make no doubt, but many particular dreams might be accounted for in the same manner; that is, from impressions made in sleep upon our organs of sense, particularly those of touch and hearing. A very slight hint, suggested from without, or in any way suggested, is sufficient for fancy to work upon, in producing multitudes of visionary exhibitions.

In confirmation of this remark, I beg leave to mention what, from good authority, I have heard of a gentleman in the army; whose imagination was so easily affected in sleep with impressions made on the outward senses, that his companions, by speaking softly in his ear, could cause him to dream of what they pleased. Once, in particular, they made him go through the whole procedure of a duel, from the beginning of the quarrel to the firing of a pistol, which they put in his hand for that purpose, and which by the explosion awaked him.

\* Arist. de Inſomn.

When therefore we have an uncommon dream, we ought to look,—not forward with apprehension, as if it were to be the forerunner of calamity; but rather backward, to see if we can trace out its cause, and whether we may not, from such a discovery, learn something that may be profitable to us.—I dream, for example, that some of my teeth drop out. That, say the vulgar, betokens the loss of friends. No doubt, if I have any friends, and should happen to outlive them, the time must come, when I shall lose them. But the dream has nothing to do, with either the loss, or the acquisition of friends: nor does it direct my thoughts to futurity at all. I wish, rather, to know, to what state of my body this dream may have been owing: which if I can find out, who knows, but I may draw advantage from my dream? My teeth seemed to drop out. Perhaps at that time my gums were affected with some painful sensation, or convulsive motion. Might not this be occasioned by too heavy a supper, or by an ill-digested dinner? Let me eat lighter food, and in less quantity, for some time, and observe, whether the same vision makes a second appearance. I make the trial; and I find that my sleep is sounder, and my dreams more agreeable. This is making a right use of dreams. And in this way, I am persuaded, that persons, who divest themselves of superstition and prejudice, might make important discoveries in regard to their health. So Plutarch thought long ago. See his dialogue called *Moschion and Zeuxippus*.

In some constitutions, certain dreams go before, or accompany, the beginnings of certain diseases. When, for example, there is any tendency to fever, we are apt to dream of performing, with great labour, some work, we know not precisely what, in which we never make any progress. This imagination will occur in sleep, even while one has no means of observing, when awake, any symptom that could lead one to suspect one's health to be in danger; and,  
when



when it does occur, may it not serve as a warning to make some change in the ordinary regimen, to eat or drink less than usual, or have recourse to some of those other methods, whereby acute distempers are prevented? In general, when one is haunted with disagreeable dreams, it may, I think, be taken as a sign, that something is wrong in the constitution; and, therefore, that temperance, fasting, or exercise, may be requisite, to avert the impending evil. And these are remedies, which one may have recourse to, and in regard to which one may venture to make a few experiments, in almost any circumstances. Agreeable dreams I would take for the signs of health; and consider them accordingly as good, and not evil.

This theory, which I have reason to think is not without foundation, may, to such as acquiesce in it, prove a good antidote to those idle superstitions in the affair of Dreaming, which have been too prevalent in all ages.

5. After hinting, that dreams may be of use in the way of physical admonition; what if I should go a step further, and say, that they may be serviceable, as means of moral improvement? I will not affirm, however, as some have done, that, by them, we may make a more accurate discovery of our temper and prevailing passions, than by observing what passes in our minds when awake. For in sleep we are very incompetent judges of ourselves, and of every thing else: and one will dream of committing crimes with little remorse, which, if awake, one could not think of without horror. But, as many of our passions are inflamed or allayed by the temperature of the body, this, I think, may be affirmed with truth, that, by attending to what passes in sleep, we may sometimes discern what passions are predominant, and so receive good hints for the regulation of them.

A man dreams, for example, that he is in violent anger, and that he strikes a blow, which knocks a person down, and kills him. He awakes in horror at the thought of what he has done, and of the punishment he thinks he has reason to apprehend: and while, after a moment's recollection, he rejoices to find, that it is but a dream, he will also be inclinable to form resolutions against violent anger, lest it should one time or other hurry him on to a real perpetration of a like nature. If we ever derive this advantage from dreams, we cannot pronounce them useless. And why may we not in this way reap improvement from a fiction of our own fancy, as well as from a novel, or a fable of Esop?

One of the finest moral tales I ever read, is an account of a dream in *The Tatler*, which, though it has every appearance of a real dream, comprehends a moral so sublime and so interesting, that I question, whether any man who attends to it can ever forget it; and, if he remembers, whether he can ever cease to be the better for it. Addison is the author of the paper; and I give the story in his own elegant words.

“ I was once, says the Tatler, in agonies of grief that are un-  
 “ utterable, and in so great a distraction of mind, that I thought  
 “ myself even out of the possibility of receiving comfort. The  
 “ occasion was as follows. When I was a youth, in a part of the  
 “ army which was then quartered at Dover, I fell in love with  
 “ an agreeable young woman, of a good family in those parts,  
 “ and had the satisfaction of seeing my addresses kindly received;  
 “ which occasioned the perplexity I am going to relate. We were,  
 “ in a calm evening, diverting ourselves on the top of the cliff  
 “ with the prospect of the sea; and trifling away the time in such  
 “ little fondnesses as are most ridiculous to people in business,  
 “ and most agreeable to those in love. In the midst of these our  
 “ innocent

“innocent endearments, she snatched a paper of verses out of  
 “my hand, and ran away with them. I was following her, when,  
 “on a sudden, the ground, though at a considerable distance from  
 “the verge of the precipice, sunk under her, and threw her down,  
 “from so prodigious an height, upon such a range of rocks, as  
 “would have dashed her into ten thousand pieces, had her body  
 “been made of adamant. It is much easier for my reader to  
 “imagine my state of mind upon such an occasion, than for me  
 “to express it. I said to myself, It is not in the power of heaven to  
 “relieve me:—when I awaked; equally transported and astonished,  
 “to see myself drawn out of an affliction, which the very moment  
 “before appeared to be altogether inextricable.”

I might enlarge on the beauty of this narrative; but I mean  
 only to recommend, to the serious consideration of the reader, the  
 important lesson implied in it. What fable of Esop, nay of Homer,  
 or of Virgil, conveys so fine a moral! Yet most people have, I am  
 sure I have, met with such deliverances by means of a dream. And  
 such a deliverance will every good man meet with at last, when he  
 is taken away from the evils of life, and awakes in the regions  
 of everlasting light and peace; looking back upon the world and  
 its troubles, with a surprize and a satisfaction, similar in kind  
 (though far higher in degree) to that which we now feel, when  
 we escape from a terrifying dream, and open our eyes upon the  
 sweet serenity of a summer morning. Let us not despise instruc-  
 tion, how mean soever the vehicle may be that brings it. Even  
 if it be a dream, we may learn to profit by it. For, whether asleep  
 or awake, we are equally the care of Providence: and neither a  
 dream, nor a waking thought, can occur to us, without the  
 permission of him, “in whom we live, and move, and have our  
 “being.”

6. The Imagination, or Fancy, seems to be almost the only one of our mental powers, which is never suspended in its operations, by sleep. Of the other faculties, some are more and others less affected, and some appear to be for a time wholly extinguished. That memory is often impaired in sleep, is evident from this, that a person shall dream of conversing with his deceased friends, without remembering any thing of their death, though that event is seldom out of his thoughts when awake. Sometimes we seem to be carried back into the ages of antiquity, without being sensible, of what in our waking moments we can never forget, that those ages were past before we had an existence: as I remember once to have dreamed, that I was passing the Alps with Hannibal and his army. Sometimes our memory seems to be more vigorous than our judgment: as when we dream of conversing with a dead friend, and yet are not surpris'd at the circumstance of seeing, and talking with, such a person \*. At other times, judgment is more active. Thus, as already observed, men sometimes conclude (and I have reason to believe that the same thing happens to children) from the absurdity of the scenes that present themselves in sleep, that they are not real; but visionary. I dreamed once, that I was walking on the parapet of a high bridge. How I came there, I did not know: but, recollecting that I had never been given to pranks of that nature, I began to think it might be a dream: and, finding my situation uneasy, and desirous to get rid of so troublesome an idea, I threw myself headlong, in the belief, that the shock of the fall would restore my senses; which happened accordingly. In a word, there are none of our powers, over which sleep does not seem, at one time or other, to have great influence, fancy alone excepted: and even this faculty appears to be extinguished, when we sleep without:

\* Essay on Truth. Part ii. chap. 2, sect. 2.

dreaming,

dreaming, (if that is ever the case) and sometimes acquires a vivacity and a wildness that are quite unaccountable.

Who can tell, but the temporary suspension of these powers may be useful, by enabling them to act more regularly, and with greater vigour, at other times? Or, to express it in different words, Who can tell, but the soul, when it has long acted in one direction, may be relieved and strengthened, by quitting the old track entirely for a while, and exerting itself in a new one? For, when we think too long on any one subject, we find that our intellectual energies become languid and unsuccessful, and that a little rest is necessary to the soul, as well as to the body. Nay, on these occasions, the mind may regain her vigour, not only by rest, but also, and more effectually perhaps, by exerting herself in another way. Thus conversation makes us forget the labour of invention: reading is a relief after the fatigue of company: musick is frequently more soothing than silence: and they, who are harassed with metaphysical uncertainty, may find a cure in the demonstrations of Euclid.

7. It was remarked, that some men dream more, and others less; and some perhaps, though these are few, not at all. This cannot be fully accounted for, from the different degrees of health which different men enjoy, nor from their different ways of life; although these, and the like peculiarities, may no doubt have influence. Persons, who think much, and take little bodily exercise, will perhaps be found to be the greatest dreamers; especially, if their imagination be active, and their nervous system very delicate: which last is too common an infirmity among men of learning. The sleep of the labouring man is sweet and sound; and his dreams he seldom remembers. For his mental faculties are not much employed, his nerves are firm, and the sphere of his imagination is narrow.

As nature does nothing in vain, is it not probable, that to the constitutions of some people Dreaming may be more necessary, as a mental recreation, than to those of others? To meditate continually on the same set of disagreeable objects, is hurtful to health, and may be fatal to reason: and when one is afflicted with low spirits, which often proceed from this very cause, the physician never fails to recommend amusements, company, travelling, sea-voyages, and other expedients, for leading the mind out of its old gloomy track, refreshing it with new ideas, and forcing it to exert itself in a new direction, and with unusual energy.

Go, soft enthusiast, quit the cypress groves,  
 Nor to the rivulet's lonely moanings tune  
 Thy sad complaint. Go, seek the chearful haunts  
 Of men, and mingle with the bustling croud.  
 Lay schemes for wealth, or power, or fame, the wish  
 Of nobler minds, and push them night and day.  
 Or join the caravan, in quest of scenes  
 New to the eye, and shifting every hour,  
 Beyond the Alps, beyond the Appenines.  
 Or, more adventurous, rush into the field  
 Where war grows hot, and raging through the sky  
 The lofty trumpet swells the maddening soul;  
 And in the hardy camp, and toilsome march  
 Forget all softer, and less manly cares.\*

They, therefore, who think more than others, may have more need than others have, of that amusement and variety which is produced by dreaming.

Certain it is, that dreams are often a relief to those, who are in perplexity, or who have long been ruminating upon disagreeable

\* Armstrong.

things, or upon any one set of ideas which they cannot easily get rid of. Nor is it necessary, in order to effect this, that a dream should in itself be pleasing. Scenes of difficulty, and even of danger, are, as we have seen, recommended to the patient oppressed with melancholy: and if a dream shall only give a new impulse, even for a short time, to the mind of such a person, it may do him an important service, however disagreeable in itself. Rarely, indeed, are they happy in their dreams, whose faculties are worn out with much thinking.

8. We are warranted by authentick history to believe, that dreams have given information of future events. Hence weak people infer, that they always were, or still may be, prophetic. But nothing is more absurd. Because in antient times there were prophets, and holy men, shall I therefore conclude, that I am a saint, or a prophet? Because the Deity has been pleased to reveal himself, in an extraordinary manner, to some persons set apart by him for extraordinary purposes, shall I therefore imagine, that he will reveal to me the trifling occurrences of my life, a few days before they happen? He has in great mercy concealed from us the knowledge of what is to come; except so far as it was necessary to us, and could not be made out by human reason. For man, acquainted with futurity, would be both useless and miserable. To him all curiosity and enterprise would be at an end; and all hope extinguished; future evils would torment him before they came; and future good, by being anticipated, would lose every charm that surprise and novelty confer upon it. And he would sit down, motionless and stupid, in expectation of evil, which he knew he could not avoid, and of good, which would give rise neither to activity, nor to desire. An oyster, endowed with sight and hearing, consciousness and reason, would not be a more wretched creature. Even

when God has foretold future events by his prophets, he has generally delivered the prophecy in terms that could not be fully understood, till after it was accomplished: for otherwise it must have interfered with the principles of human action, and with the ordinary course of human affairs.

Is it not strange, if dreams are prophetic, that, after the experience of so many ages, we should never have found out any rational way of expounding them? And if some are prophetic, but not all, is it not strange, that every species of dream should be equally familiar to good men, and to bad? For of each character, there are some superstitious people who believe in dreams, and some more rational who do not. To say, that dreams are of divine original, implies (as Aristotle has well observed) many absurdities, and this among others, that it is not to the wisest and best men they are sent, but to all indiscriminately. \*

The rules, by which the vulgar pretend to interpret dreams, are too ridiculous to be mentioned. They are indeed such, as may make almost any dream prophetic of any event. If a dream and a subsequent occurrence be the same or similar, then they believe that the dream foretold it; if totally different, and even contrary, they still believe that the dream foretold it.

That there may occasionally be a coincidence of a dream with a future event, is nothing more than one has reason to expect from the revolution of chances. It would indeed be wonderful, considering the variety of our thoughts in sleep, and that they all bear some analogy to the affairs of life, if this did never happen. But there is nothing more extraordinary in it, than that an idiot should sometimes speak to the purpose, or an irregular clock once or twice a year point to the right hour. The same coincidence of a reality

\* Aristot. de Divinatione per somnum. cap. 1.



with a previous imagination is observable when we are awake; as when a friend, whom we did not expect, happens to come in view the very moment we were thinking or speaking of him: a thing so common, that both in Latin, and in English, it may be expressed by a proverb.

9. My next remark is, that dreams depend in part on the state of the air. That, which has power over the passions, may reasonably be presumed to have power over the thoughts of men. For the thoughts, that occur to a mind actuated by any passion, are always congenial to that passion, and tend to encourage it. Now, most people experimentally know, how effectual, in producing joy and hope, are pure skies and sunshine; and that a long continuance of dark weather brings on solicitude and melancholy. This is particularly the case with those persons, whose nervous system has been weakened by a sedentary life, and much thinking; and they, as I hinted formerly, are most subject to troublesome dreams. If the external air can affect the motions of so heavy a substance as mercury, in the tube of the barometer; we need not wonder, that it should affect those finer fluids, that circulate through the human body. And if our passions and thoughts, when we are awake, may be variously modified by the consistency, defect, or redundance of these fluids, and by the state of the tubes through which they circulate; need we wonder, that the same thing should happen in sleep, when our ideas, disengaged from the controul of reason, may be supposed to be more obsequious to material impulse? When the air is loaded with gross vapour, dreams are generally disagreeable to persons of a delicate constitution.

If then our thoughts in sleep may receive form and colour from so many circumstances; from the general state of our health, from the present state of the stomach and fluids, from the

temperature of the air; from the tenor of our thoughts through the day, and from the position of outward objects operating upon our organs of sense; need we be surpris'd at the variety of our dreams? And when any uncommon or disagreeable one occurs, is it not more rational to refer it to one or other of these causes, than to terrify ourselves with a foolish conceit, that it is supernatural, and betokens calamity? How often, during the day, do thoughts arise, that we cannot account for, as uncommon perhaps, and incongruous, as those which make up our dreams!

Once, after riding thirty miles in a high wind, I remember to have pass'd part of a night in dreams, that were beyond description terrible: insomuch that I at last found it expedient to keep myself awake, that I might no more be tormented with them. Had I been superstitious, I should have thought that some disaster was impending. But it occurred to me, that the stormy weather I had encountered the preceding day might be the occasion of those horrors: and I have since, in some medical book, met with a remark to justify the conjecture. A very slight cause may check that insensible perspiration, which is so needful to health: and when this happens, we cannot expect that our dreams should be so easy, as at other times. Let no one, then, be alarmed at an uncommon dream. It is probably nothing more than a symptom of a trifling bodily disorder: and, if so, it has no more to do with futurity, nor is one whit more supernatural, than a cut finger, or a pang of the toothach.

10. Concerning the opinion, which some have entertained, that our dreams are suggested by invisible beings; I shall only say, that I think it very improbable. For, first; I see no reason for believing, that the Deity would employ “ millions of spiri-

“tual creatures” in such an office, as that of prompting our ordinary dreams. Secondly, I cannot conceive, how those creatures should be affected, in such an operation, by the external air, or by the state of our health, which are known to have great influence on our thoughts, both in sleep, and when we are awake. And, thirdly, from what we know of the rapidity of fancy when awake, we need not suppose any foreign impulse requisite to produce the various phenomena of dreaming; as the soul seems to possess in herself powers sufficient for that purpose. Fever, melancholy, and many other diseases, give a wildness to the thoughts of waking men, equal, or even superiour, to what happens in sleep. If the agency of unseen beings is not supposed to produce the first; why should we have recourse to it, in order to account for the last? — But it is urged, that in sleep, the soul is passive, and haunted by visions, which she would gladly get rid of if she could. And it may be urged in answer, for it is not less true, that persons afflicted with anxiety and melancholy too often find, to their sad experience, that their soul is almost equally passive, when they are awake; for that they are, even then, haunted with tormenting thoughts, from which all their powers of reason, all the exertions of their will, and all the exhortations of their friends, cannot effectually relieve them.

To conclude: Providence certainly superintends the affairs of men; and often, we know not how often, interposes for our preservation. It would, therefore, be presumptuous to affirm, that supernatural cautions, in regard to futurity, are never communicated in dreams. It is the design of these remarks, not to contradict any authentick experience, or historical fact; but only to show, that dreams may proceed from a variety of causes,  
which

which have nothing supernatural in them: and that, though we are not much acquainted with the nature of this wonderful mode of perception, we know enough of it to see, that it is not useless or superfluous, but may, on the contrary, answer some purposes of great importance to our welfare, both in soul and in body.

T H E  
T H E O R Y  
O F  
L A N G U A G E.  
I N T W O P A R T S.

Part I. Of the Origin and General Nature of  
Speech.

Part II. Of Universal Grammar.

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Ex elementis constant, ex principiis oriuntur, omnia: Et ex iudicii  
consuetudine in rebus MINUTIS adhibita pendet sæpissime in maximis vera  
atque accurata scientia. S. CLARKE. Pref. ad Homer.

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# The Theory of Language.

## P A R T I.

### Of the Origin and General Nature of Speech.

#### C H A P. I.

*Man, the only Animal capable of Speech. — Speech, an Art, acquired by Imitation. — Natural Signs of human Thought. — Artificial Signs of Thought: — first, Visible; — secondly, Audible.*

**T**HE faculties of the human mind have long ago been divided into those of Perception and those of Volition; the former being supposed to be the inlets to knowledge; the latter, the instruments of action. But, in many cases, we cannot perceive without an exertion of the will; nor act, without adding to our stock of knowledge: and therefore, the division, though sufficiently accurate perhaps, is not perfectly so. The faculty of Speech is Active, because we act, while we make use of it; and may also be called Perceptive, because by means of it we perceive what passes in the minds of one another.

But whether we call it Active, or Perceptive, or to what class of human powers we refer it, is a matter of no consequence. It is one of the distinguishing characters of our nature; none of the inferior animals being in any degree possessed of it.

For we must not call by the name of *Speech* that imitation of human articulate voice, which parrots and some other birds are

capable of; Speech implying thought, and consciousness, and the power of separating and arranging our ideas, which are faculties peculiar to rational minds. In Greek, the same word *Logos* denotes both Speech and Reason; and in Latin, Reason is *Ratio*, and Speech *Oratio*, which, I presume, may be resolved into *oris ratio*, that is *mouth-reason*, or reason made audible by the mouth: a proof, that the Greeks and Romans considered Reason and Speech as very nearly allied.

That some inferior animals should be able to mimic human articulation, will not seem wonderful, when we recollect, that even by machines certain words have been articulated. But that the parrot should annex thought to the word he utters, is as unlikely, as that a machine should do so. *Rogue* and *knave* are in every parrot's mouth: but the ideas they stand for are incomprehensible, except by beings endued with reason and a moral faculty.

It has however been a common opinion, and is probable enough, that there may be, among irrational animals, something, which by a *figure* we may call *Language*, even as the instinctive economy of bees is figuratively called *Government*. This at least is evident, that the natural voices of one animal are in some degree intelligible, or convey particular feelings, or impulses, to others of the same species. The summons of the hen is understood by the chickens: and a similar mode of communication may be observed, in many of the irrational tribes, between the parents and offspring, and between one animal and his customary associate. Nay, to dogs and horses, and even to other creatures of less sagacity, the voice of their master soon becomes familiar; and they learn to perform certain actions, on receiving certain audible or visible signals, from those whom they are wont to obey. This, however, is a proof, rather of their docility, and of the quickness of their eye and ear, than of any *intelligence* in regard to language. And it is

more



more to the present purpose to remark, that in one and the same brute animal different passions often express themselves by different voices. How unlike, for example, are the cries of the same dog, when he barks at the stranger, snarls at his enemy, whines with hunger or cold, howls with sorrow when he loses his master, or whimpers with joy when he finds him again ! \*

But these, and the like animal voices, have no analogy with human speech.—For, first, men speak by art and imitation, whereas the voices in question are wholly instinctive : for that a dog, which had never heard another bark, would notwithstanding bark himself, admits of no doubt ; and that a man, who had never heard any language, would not speak any, is equally certain.—Secondly, the voices of brute animals are not broken, or resolvable, into distinct elementary sounds, like those of man when he speaks, (who is, from this circumstance, called by Homer and Hesiod *Merops* or *voice-dividing*) ; nor are they susceptible of that variety, which would be necessary for the communication of a very few sentiments : and it is pretty certain, that, previously to instruction, the young animals comprehend their meaning, as well as the old.—And, thirdly, these voices seem intended by nature to express, not distinct ideas, but such feelings only, as it may be for the good

\* These, and some other varieties in the voice of this animal, are described by Lucretius with exquisite propriety.

Irritata canum cum primum magna molossùm  
 Mollia ricta fremunt duros nudantia dentes ;  
 Longe alio sonitu rabie distracta minantur,  
 Et cum jam latrant, et vocibus omnia complent.  
 At catulos blande cum lingua lambere tentant,  
 Aut ubi eos jactant pedibus, morſuque petentes,  
 Suspensis veros imitantur dentibus haustus,  
 Longe alio pacto gannitu vocis adulant ;  
 Et cum deserti baubantur in ædibus, aut cum  
 Plorantes fugiunt summiſſo corpore plagas. V. 1062.

of the species, or for the advantage of man, that they should have the power of uttering: in which, as in all other respects, they are analogous, not to our speaking, but to our weeping, laughing, groaning, screaming, and other natural and audible expressions of passion.

In this light they are considered by Aristotle, in the following passage. "Man of all animals is only possessed of speech. Bare sound indeed may be the sign of what is pleasurable or painful; and for that reason is it common even to other animals also. For so far we perceive even their nature can go, that they have a sense of those *feelings*, and *signify them* to each other. But Speech is made to indicate what is expedient, and what hurtful, and, in consequence of this, what is just, and unjust. It is therefore given to men: because this, with respect to other animals, is to men alone peculiar, that of Good and Evil, Just and Unjust, they only possess a sense or feeling \*."

Some animals seem to employ their voice, without any purpose of giving information to others of the species. The lark, sings a great part of the day, even when alone. This affords a presumption, that her song has nothing in it of the nature of speech. That energy seems natural to the animal when soaring in the sky: perhaps it may be of benefit to her, as an amusement: certainly it is very pleasing to the ear of man.

Some birds sing, while preparing their nests, and taking care of their young, and are silent the rest of the year. But it is not the nature of speech to be periodical: whereas those energies must be so, which are the effect of periodical feelings. Others of the brute creation are most apt to utter their voices, when the weather is about to change. But can we suppose, that they are then *thinking*

\* Translated by Mr. Harris. See *Treatise concerning Happiness*, note fifteenth.

of the weather, or that they *intend* to give information concerning it? Is it not more likely, that, as Virgil observes, their bodies being affected by alterations of the atmosphere which we cannot perceive \*, they are then, without any purpose, expressing instinctively certain pleasant, or painful sensations; even as the infant of a month old does, while it is crying, or smiling?

We learn to speak, by imitating others; and therefore he cannot speak, who does not hear. It was once a vulgar notion, that a person brought up from infancy without hearing any language would of himself speak Hebrew; this having been thought the first, the most sacred, and the most natural dialect. But it is now acknowledged, and is even said to have been proved by experiment, that such a person would be dumb; or, at least, would employ his voice in imitating the inarticulate sounds he might have heard, or in expressing certain feelings by groans, laughter, cries, and the like modes of natural utterance.

I formerly knew a poor man, who spoke a very singular dialect. His name was William More; his age about sixty. He was so deaf, that his neighbours doubted, whether he could be made hear any sound whatever. He had constantly resided in the parish where he was born, was never thirty miles from home, and, so far as I know, never saw a foreigner. The language he uttered was intelligible to those only, who had bestowed some attention upon

\* Haud equidem credo, quia sit divinitus illis  
 Ingenium, aut rerum fato prudentia major:  
 Verum, ubi tempestas et cœli mobilis humor  
 Mutavere vias, et Jupiter humidus austris  
 Denfat erant quæ rara modo, et quæ densa relaxat,  
 Vertuntur species animorum, et pectora motus  
 Nunc alios, alios dum nûbila ventus agebat,  
 Concipiunt. Hinc ille avium concentus in agris,  
 Et lætæ pecudes, et ovantes gutture corvi,      Georgic. i. 415.

it; and he himself understood no other. It was made up, partly of English or Scotch words, most of them much altered, and partly of other words that were altogether his own. Of the former class, I remember, that his usual affirmation was *trot*, probably corrupted from *trotb*; *corn* was *tora*; *come* was *tum*; and instead of *soldier* he said *skolta*. Of the latter sort may be reckoned, *odee*, signifying *good*; *blava*, *evil*; *virrup*, a *duck*; *raad*, *vehemently*; *furrè*, to *cut*, or *kill*; *plode*, a *man*; *pitoot*, a *gentleman*. As he had little knowledge but what belonged to the business of a labourer, his ideas were few, and his language very defective; consisting chiefly of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, with some adverbs: his words had no inflection: and I think he used neither articles, nor conjunctions, and scarce any pronouns. He looked steadily in the face of those who spoke to him, and seemed to gather the meaning, by sight, from the motion of their lips.

Though I was then very young, I had great curiosity to know the history of his early years: but could never learn more than this; that there was nothing remarkable in it; and that his father, and mother, and all his relations and neighbours, spoke like other people.—It seems probable, that he had never heard very acutely, but did not become quite deaf till he was four or five years old: the consequence of which would be, his retaining some words imperfectly, and forgetting many others. For, if he had from his birth been as deaf as when I knew him, he never could have spoken at all: if he had been under that age when he lost his hearing, he could hardly have articulated the letter R so distinctly as he did: and if he had been much older, he would no doubt have remembered more of his mother tongue. The peculiar formation of his own words it is impossible to account for, unless we were better informed in regard to his infancy and education. All his syllables were easily pronounced; he had little emphasis, and no accent,

nor any diphthongal sounds: and his articulations were performed by the lips, the tongue, and the palate, being seldom nasal, and, I think, never guttural. He was a chearful, sober, honest man; and spoke reverently of the Supreme Being, by a name, which, though I have not forgotten, I do not chuse to set down.\*—These facts, though little can be inferred from them, are not unworthy of notice.

We speak, in order to communicate our thoughts to one another; which our social affections incline us powerfully to do: and the practice of speaking improves our natural faculty of separating, arranging, and comparing our ideas. I call that faculty natural, and consider it as the foundation of the art of speech: for, without it, though some animals might be so taught, or a machine so constructed, as to articulate words, it would be impossible to speak rationally, or with intelligence.

As what passes in my mind cannot itself appear to another man, it must be imparted, (if at all imparted) by means of *signs*, or outward actions obvious to sense. And they, as expressive of human thought, may be divided into Natural and Artificial.

The *Natural Signs* of thought are those changes in the complexion, eyes, features, and attitude, and those peculiar tones of

\* Bishop Burnet gives a similar instance of M. Godet's daughter of Geneva; who at the age of two years lost her hearing, and never after could hear what was said to her; though she was not wholly insensible to great noises. By observing the motions of the mouth and lips of others, she had acquired so many words, that out of these she had formed a sort of jargon, in which she could hold conversation whole days with those who could speak her language. She knew nothing that was said to her, unless she saw the motion of their mouths who spoke; so that in the night they were obliged to light candles, when they wanted to speak to her. She had a sister, with whom she had practised her language more than with any body else: and, what is strange, though not unaccountable, by laying her hand, in the dark, on her lips and face, she could perceive by their motion what was said, and so could discourse with her in the dark.

Burnet. Letter iv. page 248.

the voice, which all men know to be significant of certain passions and sentiments. Thus Anger, Joy, Sorrow, Hope, Fear, Scorn, Contentment, Pity, Admiration, when under no restraint, appear in the voice, looks, and behaviour: and the appearance is every where understood, either by a natural instinct; or by our having learned experimentally, that a certain sign accompanies, and indicates, a certain feeling, or idea. And that this kind of signs admits of considerable variety, is evident, not only from the pantomime, in which the whole progress of a dramattick fable is represented in dumb show, and by natural signs only; but also from the manifold expressions of human thought, which are exhibited to the eye by painters and statuaries. Yet, when compared with the endless variety of our ideas, these natural signs will appear to be but few. And many thoughts there are, in the mind of every man, which produce no sensible alteration in the body.

Artificial Signs, or Language, have, therefore, been employed universally for the purpose of communicating thought; and are found so convenient, as to have superseded in a great measure, at least in many nations, the use of the Natural. Yet, where language has been little improved, as among savages, and is of course defective in clearness and energy, it is for the most part enforced by looks, gestures, and voices, naturally significant: and even some polite nations, the French for example, from an inborn vivacity, or acquired restlessness, accompany their speech with innumerable gestures, in order to make it the more emphatical; while people of a graver turn, like the English and Spaniards, and who have words for all their ideas, trust to language alone for a full declaration of their mind, and seldom have recourse to gesticulation, unless when violence of passion throws them off their guard. However, as the natural signs *may* give strength and grace to the artificial,

artificial, it is expected, even where the greatest national gravity prevails, that, in his publick performances, the former should, in such a degree, be adopted by the orator, as to show that he is in earnest, and by the stage-player, as that he may the more effectually imitate nature.

For elocution is not perfect, unless the artificial signs of thought are enforced by the natural, or at least by such of them, as are neither troublesome to the speaker, nor offensive to the hearer. Words of indignation pronounced with a soft voice and a smile, jokes accompanied with weeping, or lamentation with laughter, would be ridiculous: but, on the other hand, if a player, in reciting a melancholy strain, were to burst out into real tears, he would lose that self-command, without which nothing can be done with elegance. Actors will never express naturally what they do not intensely feel\*: yet their feelings must not divest them of their presence of mind, nor disqualify them for any exertion that belongs to their part. And I remember, that, on asking Garrick, how it was possible for one who felt as he did, to act with so much nature and grace, and with such perfect self-command, he told me, that I had touched upon the most essential, and what he had always found the most difficult, point of theatrical imitation.

In that oratory, which is addressed to the passions, and which in this country is little used, the natural signs of thought must enforce the artificial with as strong an energy, as in the action of the theatre. But the publick speaker, whose aim is to instruct and persuade, gives scope to those natural expressions only, that imply conviction, and earnestness, with a mild and benevolent demeanour, and sometimes a modest dignity becoming the cause of truth and virtue. And in polite conversation, no voices, looks,

\* See Hor. Ar. Poet. ver. 99—111.—and an Essay on Poetry and Musick as they affect the Mind. Part i. chap. 3.

or attitudes are allowable, but such as betoken kindness, attention, good-humour, and a desire to please.

Des Cartes, and some other philosophers, have endeavoured to explain the physical cause, which connects a human passion with its correspondent natural sign. They wanted to show, from the principles of motion and of the animal economy, why Fear, for example, produces trembling and paleness; why Laughter attends the perception of incongruity; why Anger inflames the blood, contracts the brows, and distends the nostrils; why Shame is accompanied with blushing; why Despair fixes the teeth together, distorts the joints, and disfigures the features; why Scorn shoots out the lip; why Sorrow overflows at the eyes; why Envy and Jealousy look askance; and why Admiration raises the eyebrows, and opens the mouth. Such inquiries may give rise to ingenious observation; but are not in other respects useful, because never attended with success. He who established the union of soul and body knows how, and by what intermediate instruments, the one operates upon the other. But to man this is a mystery unsearchable. We can only say, that tears accompany sorrow, and the other natural signs their respective passions and sentiments, because such is the will of our Creator, and the law of the human constitution.

The *Artificial* Signs of thought derive their meaning from human art and compact; and are not understood, except by those who have been taught how to use them. Of these any man may invent a system; and by their means converse, with those who are in the secret, so as that nobody else shall understand him.

They are divided into *Visible* and *Audible*. For, though human thoughts may be communicated by touch, (as people of certain professions are said to know a brother, and to make themselves known to him, by taking hold of his hand; and Mr. Sanderson of

Cambridge,



Cambridge, who was born blind, studied and taught geometry by diagrams cut in wood;) yet tangible signs of thought are not in common use, nor at all requisite on ordinary occasions.

Of *Visible* Artificial Signs there may be many sorts. Dumb men use them in conversation, and enforce them by a variety of natural signs. And where a dumb man is known to make his thumb (for example) a sign of *good*, and his little finger of *evil*, his meaning is understood as well when he holds up or points to those organs, as if he were to utter the words *good* or *evil*. And, after he is instructed in the nature of written language, it would be no difficult matter to teach him how to make and use an alphabet, by pointing to the several joints of his fingers, or to other parts of his body; which among his friends would be of great benefit to him, both in the way of amusement, and as an inlet to knowledge. Dumb men of quick parts do generally express a word, or an idea, by a single sign; which is a more expeditious method than the other, but not so accurate, or so comprehensive.

This sort of visible alphabet, by which different parts of the hand represent different vowels and consonants, is much used, as I am told, in nunneries and boarding-schools; and conveys, when one becomes expert in it, sentiments as clearly, though not so quickly, as words could do.

At sea, when ships sail in company, visible signs are not only useful, but necessary. A system of these, for the use of the British navy, was invented by James II, about an hundred years ago; and is said to be so convenient, that it has not to this day been materially improved. Every British seaman in the King's service is trained up in the knowledge of them: and, to prevent mistakes from forgetfulness, every commander in the navy receives from the Admiralty a book, wherein are explained the meaning of the several signals, and the method of conveying orders or intelligence

from one ship to any other in the squadron. These signals, many of which, that they may be the more significant, are accompanied with the firing of guns, are made, by hanging out, from the several parts of the ship, lights in the night-time, and flags and streamers of different colours by day. The fullest account of them, that I have seen, is in Chambers's Dictionary, under the word *Signal*.

The antients, particularly the Greeks, were remarkable for their ingenious contrivance of signals by fire. We are assured, that, in a mountainous country, they could in a moment, by means of torches, convey intelligence to a very great distance. They even invented a method of expressing, by the number and arrangement of flambeaus, every letter of the alphabet; so that a guard on one eminence could converse, by spelling their words, with another many leagues off. There is an exact description of it in Polybius; and in the seventeenth book of the Antient History by Rollin; who adds, that he had seen a pamphlet, printed in 1702, and dedicated to the King of France by Mons. Marcel, which explained a system of signals, whereby any piece of news could be communicated by one ship to another at a distance, as quickly as it could be set down in writing.

Fire-signals are of great antiquity. Clytemnestra, at Argos, is said to have received, in this way, intelligence of the destruction of Troy, the very night in which it was taken. A fire, kindled by Agamemnon's order on mount Ida, was seen at Lemnos, where another was instantly lighted, which was repeated on Athos, and so forwarded from one eminence to another, where guards had been placed on purpose, till at last it shone on the heights of Arachne, and was descried by a watchman stationed on the top of Clytemnestra's palace. The progress of these signals is minutely described by Eschylus, in the tragedy of Agamemnon; which opens with a soliloquy of the watchman, complaining, that for nine years

he had passed the night in that place without sleep, looking out for the promised signal. While he is speaking, he discovers it, and gives notice to the queen; who, in announcing the good news, informs the chorus, by what means it had been transmitted to her. The passage is curious; and proves at least, that signals by fire were well known in Greece in the days of Eschylus; who flourished five hundred years before Christ. Quintus Curtius relates, that they were frequent among the Asiatics in the time of Alexander: and we learn from Cesar and Livy, that they were used by the Romans. Traces of them are still to be seen on the tops of mountains in Spain. And in this kingdom there are several high hills, hollowed a little on the summit, which retain the marks of burning, and are by some believed to have been volcanoes; though I think it more probable, that they may have been stations, where fires were occasionally lighted to alarm the country. Of these I remember three in the neighbourhood of Inverness, each visible from the other, and about ten miles distant; and one in the county of Angus, not far from Aberlemno.

Any human action might be made the sign of thought; but all are not equally convenient. Our ideas arise and shift with great quickness: and therefore, those actions or signs only can do them justice in the expression, which are easily performed, and of great variety, and in each variety obvious to sense. By means of an alphabet formed by pointing to the joints of the fingers, and by other sorts of gesticulation, many human sentiments might no doubt be expressed; but visible signs of this kind are of no use in the dark, and when distant are not perceptible; nor do they admit of sufficient variety; nor are they so easy in the performance, as the necessities of life would often require. But Audible Signs are equally useful by night and by day, and may be understood at a considerable distance: and the sounds of one and the same human  
voice

voice may be varied without end, and are, in all their varieties, easily managed, and by the human ear distinctly perceptible. Indeed, when we compare the ear with the voice of man, we are at a loss to determine, whether the one is the more admirable for its power of diversifying sounds, or the other for that of distinguishing them.—Audible Signs, therefore, constitute language in all nations. And if men could always be present with those to whom they wish to give information, signals, and every other visible sign of thought, would be unnecessary; and speech, as it is the readiest, would be the only, vehicle of human sentiment.

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## CHAP. II.

*Of the organs of Speech, and the nature and powers of the human Voice. — Of Articulation. Vowel and Consonant Sounds, — their formation, and various classes. Thirty two or thirty three elementary sounds in the English tongue.*

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the endless variety of human articulate voices, their elementary sounds are few and simple, at least in all the languages I am acquainted with.—But before I proceed to the elements of Speech, it may be proper to premise some observations on the nature and powers of the human voice.

Human Voice is air sent out from the lungs, and so agitated, or modified, in its passage through the windpipe and larynx, as to become distinctly audible. The windpipe, wezand, or rough artery, is that tube, which, on touching the forepart of our throat externally,

nally, we feel hard and uneven. It conveys air into the lungs for the purpose of respiration and speech. It consists of cartilages, circular before, that they may the better resist external injury; but flattish on the opposite side, that they may not hurt the gullet, or esophagus; which lies close behind, and is the tube whereby what we eat and drink is conveyed into the stomach. These cartilages are separated by fleshy membranes; by means of which the windpipe may be shortened or lengthened a little, and, when necessary, incurvated, without inconvenience.

The top, or upper part, of the windpipe is called the Larynx; consisting of four or five cartilages, that may be expanded or brought together, by the agency of certain muscles which operate all at the same time. In the middle of the larynx there is a small aperture, called the Glottis, through which the breath and voice are conveyed, but which, when we swallow any thing, is covered by a lid called the Epiglottis: for if any part of our food or drink were to get into the windpipe by this passage, it would occasion coughing, till it were thrown out again.

Galen, and many other philosophers, affirm, that both the larynx and the windpipe co-operate in rendering the breath vocal. But later authors have determined, and I think on good grounds, that the human voice is produced by two semicircular membranes in the middle of the larynx, which form by their separation the aperture that is termed the Glottis. The space between them is not wider than one tenth of an inch; through which the breath transmitted from the lungs must needs pass with considerable velocity. In its passage, it is supposed to give a brisk vibratory motion to the membranous lips of the glottis, and so to form the sound which we call *voice*: by an operation, similar to that of the two lips of the reed of a hautboy, when one takes them in one's mouth, and blows into them.

It seems, however, necessary, in order to the production of voice, that, by an energy of our will, a certain degree of tension should be communicated to the larynx, or at least to the two membranes abovementioned: for we find, that we *can* breathe very strongly without vocal sound; and when we speak or sing, we are sensible of a peculiar tension or hardness in the organs of the throat, which seem to be more lax when we only breathe or whisper. When we are in great pain, these organs of themselves become tense, and transform our breathing into groans; a circumstance, that is often of use to us; by raising pity in others, or bringing them to our aid, when we are incapable of speech. And then, to repress our groans, by keeping the vocal membranes lax, requires an energy, which we do not care to continue, because it is fatiguing and painful. Hence we say, that groaning relieves us; and in fact it does so: at least, it is then more easy to groan, than to breathe without groaning.

The voice, thus formed, is strengthened and mellowed by a reverberation from the palate, and other hollow places in the inside of the mouth and nostrils: and as these are better or worse shaped for this reverberation, the voice is said to be more or less agreeable. And thus the vocal organs of man appear to be, as it were, a species of flute, or hautboy; whereof the membranous lips of the glottis are the mouth, or reed, and the inside of the throat, palate and nostrils, the body: the windpipe being nothing more than the tube or canal, which conveys the wind from the lungs to the aperture of this musical instrument.

Take the reed of a hautboy, put it between your lips, and blow into it; and a distinct sound is heard: press it a little with your lips, blowing as before, and the sound becomes more acute or shrill: press it still more, that is, bring the two sides of the reed still closer, and the sound is still more acute. From this example

we


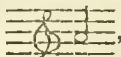
we may partly conceive, in what manner the human voice is varied, with respect to the acuteness or gravity of its tones. The glottis is found to be narrower in women and young persons than in men; and hence mens voices are deeper, or graver, than those of boys and women. And we can at pleasure dilate or contract this aperture, and so fashion the tones of our voice into every variety of the musical scale. But all have not this faculty in the same degree. Some voices comprehend two, and, by straining, even three octaves. Others have hardly the command of one. Two octaves are no uncommon medium. Voices that go very deep can seldom rise high; and those which are of a shrill treble are unable to reach the low notes of the bass. In other words; when the aperture of the glottis is naturally wide, it cannot be made very narrow; and when it is naturally narrow, it cannot be made very wide. At least, this seems to be a general rule; but it is not without exceptions. And it is somewhat remarkable, that of those voices which are most necessary in harmony, as trebles and basses, there is great abundance; while counter-tenor voices, whereof one is sufficient in a numerous chorus, are not often met with.—As to the strength, or weakness, of the voice; it depends, on the strength or weakness of the lungs; on the greater or less force that is exerted in emitting the breath; and partly too, perhaps, on the shape and magnitude of those cavities in the throat and mouth, by which the sound is reverberated.

It is hardly possible for him, whose musical ear is naturally bad, ever to acquire such a command of the membranes that form the glottis, as to separate the tones of the voice by their true musical intervals: which to persons of a nice ear is so easy, even in infancy, that they find it difficult to do otherwise. Yet a nice ear is not always accompanied with an exact voice. The voice, like every other faculty, may be improved by exercise, and grow worse by

neglect : and there is, in the vocal organs of some people, a certain unpliableness, which no cultivation is able to overcome.

If we consider the many varieties of sound, which one and the same human voice is capable of uttering, together with the smallness of the diameter of the glottis; and reflect, that the same diameter must always produce the same tone, and, consequently, that to every change of tone a correspondent change of diameter is necessary; we must be filled with astonishment at the mechanism of these parts, and the fineness of the fibres that operate in producing effects so minute, so various, and in their proportions so exactly uniform. For it admits of proof, that the diameter of the human glottis is capable of at least sixty distinct degrees of contraction or enlargement, by each of which a different note is produced; and yet the greatest diameter of that aperture does not exceed one tenth of an inch. This, though certain in fact, is conceivable by those only, who can form an idea of that division, whereby an inch is parcelled out into six hundred parts. I speak not of extraordinary voices, whose powers may be incomparably greater; as indeed some authors have by calculation proved that they are\*. What is here affirmed will

\* That the variations of diameter here ascribed to the human glottis are only the half of what it is capable of, may be evinced as follows. Suppose a man can sing from

*Gamut*  to *Alamire* of the treble , which is no extraordinary compass,

being only two octaves and one *great tone*. Let him take his fundamental note from the third string of the violoncello, and sing two octaves. Then let the instrument be tuned one *comma* (or the ninth part of a great tone) higher, and let him take his fundamental note, and sing two octaves, as before: and so proceed, raising the tone of the instrument in the same proportion, and singing two octaves accordingly, till the sound of the string be nine commas, or one great tone, higher than it was at the first. In this way he sings sixteen octaves, every one of which is in every note different from the rest. Now in sixteen different octaves there are one hundred and twenty different tones, which are all founded by the voice of him who makes this experiment: in the course of which, the diameter of his glottis, though no more than one tenth of an inch, must



will be found to hold true of any musical voice of tolerable volubility and compass. And if so, we need not wonder, that the best singers should often fail in the command of their voice. The fibres that minister to motions so exceedingly minute must themselves be very delicate; and therefore liable to be affected by the state of the air, and of the stomach, the general habit of the body, the emotions of the mind, and a thousand other circumstances.

When we sing the notes of a tune without applying syllables, we use and vary our voice without articulation, and our vocal organs perform no other part than that of a wind instrument of musick. Speech is made up of *articulate* voices: and what we call *Articulation* is performed, not by the lungs, windpipe, or larynx, but by the action of the throat, palate, teeth, tongue, lips, and nostrils. Yet, in speaking with *accent* \*, the membranes of the glottis must be continually employed in contracting and dilating themselves; because, as will be observed hereafter, the voice is then continually rising and falling in its tone: and, in speaking with *emphasis* \*, the lungs are continually employed, not only in supplying that breath of which the voice is made, but also in emitting it sometimes with more and sometimes with less force; because, as will appear by and by, the voice is then continually varying its energy in respect of strength and softness.—Speech is articulated voice: Whispering is articulated breath.

Articulation begins not, till the breath, or voice, has passed through the larynx. The simplest articulate voices are those which proceed from an open mouth, and are by Grammarians called *Vocal*

must have undergone one hundred and twenty distinct variations. So that, if an inch were divided into twelve hundred parts, the divisions would not be more minute than those variations are, which in the case supposed would affect the diameter of the human glottis.

\* See the fourth and fifth chapters.

or *Vowel* sounds. In transmitting these, the aperture of the mouth may be pretty large, or somewhat smaller, or very small: which is one cause of the variety of vowels; a particular sound being produced by each particular aperture. Moreover, in passing through an open mouth, the voice may be gently acted upon, by the lips; or by the tongue and palate; or by the tongue and throat: whence another source of variety in vowel sounds.

Thus nine simple vowels may be formed; which Wallis, in his excellent Grammar, endeavours to prove are all heard in the English language, though we have not nine vowel letters to express them. But Dr. Kenrick, in the preface to his Rhetorical Dictionary, shows, that the number of our simple vowel sounds is eleven\*. Perhaps the pronunciation of English may have changed a little since the time of Wallis, who flourished an hundred and thirty years ago; and there may be vowel sounds in it now, which were not in it then. This will not seem an extravagant supposition, when it is considered, that Wallis gives the same sound to the vowel in *lamb* and *dame*, which are now pronounced differently; makes the vowel sound in *muse* simple, which is now diphthongal; and informs us, that some old people in his time retained so much of Chaucer's pronunciation, as to say *housè* and *horsè*, articulating in these and the like words the final *e* †, which is now invariably mute. In other tongues there may be simple vowel sounds quite different

\* These eleven sounds are, according to Kenrick, as follows. Numb. 1. Cur, Sir, Her, Monk, Blood.—2. Bull, Wolf, Push.—3. Pool, Troop.—4. Oft, Soft, George.—5. What, Was, War.—6. No, Foe, Beau.—7. Hard, Part, Laugh, Heart.—8. And, Hat, Bar.—9. Bay, They, Fail, Tale, Great, Dale, Vale.—10. Met, Sweat, Head, Bread, Realm, Ready.—11. Fit, Guilt, English.—But are not the vowels Number 2 and 3, the same in the sound, and different only in the quantity; the former short, and the latter long? If this be granted, our simple vowel sounds are reduced to Ten.

† This is still done by the vulgar in Scotland; but the words so pronounced are diminutives. Thus *housè* is a small house, *horsè* a little horse. They also say, *Mannie*, *Gunnie*, *Staffie*, &c. meaning a little man, a little gun, a little staff.

from ours. Such is that of the French *u*; which is not heard in England, or in the North of Scotland; but in all the lowland provinces of North Britain, from the Grampian mountains to the Tweed, is still in very frequent use.

When the voice, in its passage through the mouth, is totally intercepted, or strongly compressed, there is formed a certain modification of articulate sound, which, as expressed by a character in writing, is called a *Consonant*. Silence is the effect of a total interception; and indistinct sound, of a strong compression: and therefore a consonant is not of itself a distinct articulate voice; and its influence in varying the tones of language is not clearly perceived, unless it be accompanied by an opening of the mouth, that is, by a vowel.—The consonants that proceed from an *interception* of the voice, are called *Clauses* or *Closes* by Wallis; who very ingeniously divides them into classes, upon the following principle.

The human voice, in passing through the mouth, may be *intercepted*, by the lips, or by the tongue and palate, or by the tongue and throat: and each of these interceptions may happen, when the voice is directed to go out by the mouth only; or through the nostrils only; or partly through the mouth, and partly through the nose.

Thus, if the voice, directed to the mouth only, be totally intercepted by the lips, we articulate what is expressed by the letter P; if by the tongue and palate, T; if by the tongue and throat, K. These three consonants are properly called *mutes*; because these interceptions, unless preceded or followed by a vowel, produce absolute silence.

Again; if the voice, directed to go forth, partly through the mouth, and partly through the nose, be totally intercepted by the lips, we form the sound expressed by B; if by the tongue and palate, D; if by the tongue and throat, the simple sound of G, as

it is heard in the word *go*. This triad of consonants are called *Semi-mutes*; because without the assistance of any vowel they produce a faint sound, which continues for a little time, and seems partly to pass out by the nose, and partly to reverberate from the roof of the mouth. And hence, when the nose is shut, it is not easy for us to give them a distinct utterance.

Further; while the voice is passing out by the nostrils chiefly, if the lips be closed, we hear the sound of M; if the forepart of the tongue be applied to the palate, N is formed; and if the tongue be drawn a little backward towards the throat, we produce the final sound of the words *sing, ring, long, &c.* These are called *Semi-vowels*; because of themselves, and without the aid of any vowel, they make a sound which is not very indistinct, and may be continued as long as we please. If, while we are founding them, we suddenly shut our nose, the sound ceases entirely; which is a proof, that it goes out by the nostrils. And if we attempt to articulate them, after having first shut our nose, the sounds produced will resemble B, D, and G, more than M, N, and ING; a proof, that, in these two classes of consonants, the mode of interception is almost, if not altogether, the same.

With the same dispositions of the organs, and the same modes of emitting the breath, if the voice be not totally intercepted, but *strongly compressed* in its passage, there is formed a second order of consonants, called by Wallis *Apertæ* or *Open*; and which are indeed the aspirations of the mutes and semi-mutes. For the semi-vowels, if they could be aspirated, would, in our author's opinion, become Groans or Lowings, rather than articulate voices. And yet perhaps in some languages they may be aspirated, though they are not in ours.

Thus, if, in pronouncing P, or rather *ip*, we permit the breath to pass out with some difficulty between our lips, we form that  
sound

found of F which is heard in *off*. And, in the same manner, from B are formed V (or that found of F which is heard in *of*) when the aperture of the lips is small and oblong; and W, when that aperture approaches to the circular form. So from T, if the breath is allowed to pass between the tongue and the teeth, we derive that found of *th* which is heard in the word *think*: from which if the tongue is drawn a little backwards, and the breath passes with a kind of whistling found between it and the palate, we articulate S. And, by the same process, we change D, first, into that found of *Tb* which is heard in *Thine*; and secondly, into Z, or that found of the letter S, which is heard in *mans, laws, please, &c.*—These two sounds of *Tb*, which are so common in our tongue, and give us no trouble, are of most difficult acquisition to foreigners\*: a proof, that simple and easy articulations may be very laborious to those, who have not been used to them in infancy:—*adeo in teneris consuefcere multum est.*

In pronouncing S, if we draw the point of the tongue a little backwards, we change the consonant into the final found of the word *blush*; which, though we mark it in writing by two letters *Sb*, is as simple a found as that of S.—In the same manner; namely, by drawing the point of the tongue a little backwards while we articulate Z, we form the simple found of the French J; which, according to the analogy of our alphabet, would be expressed by the letters Zh. This found in its simple form is heard in *vision, Asia, derision, evasion, &c.*: and makes the last part of the complex found of the soft G, as it is heard in *gem*; which complex found, if I mistake not, might be resolved into *dzb*.

\* “I have seen,” says Sir David Dalrymple, “P. Wesseling, the editor of Diodorus Siculus, distort his face into convulsions, while attempting to express the just found of a Greek *Tletz*.”  
Annals of Scotland, vol. i. page 5.

The liquids L and R are acknowledged by Wallis to be anomalous. He is inclined to derive them from D and N. He mentions a tribe of American Indians adjoining to New England, who cannot articulate R or L; but, when they attempt either, fall into N, and instead of *lobster* say *nobsten* \* : and we know, that R is one of the last letters which European infants learn to pronounce, and that they are apt to use L in its stead. From all which we may gather, that the liquids N, L, and R, bear a close affinity one with another.

If, while we articulate K, we let our breath pass with a pretty strong compression between the middle of the tongue and throat, there is formed that guttural sound, which in Scotland (where it is very common) is supposed to express the Greek X, and in the vulgar dialect of that country is annexed to the letters *gh* in the words *might*, *light*, *bright*, *figh*, &c. In the same manner, by permitting the simple sound of G, as it is heard in *go*, to escape from between the tongue and throat, in the form of an aspiration, we pronounce another guttural, not unlike the former, which in Scotland makes the final sound of the word *lough* or *loch* (lake), and in Spanish expresses the import of the first letter of the word *Juan*. These two gutturals were certainly heard in the Anglo-Saxon (or one of them at least), but have been long disused in South Britain; and an Englishman finds it difficult to pronounce them; though to Scotchmen, who are inured to them from infancy, nothing is more easy.

The sound of the consonant Y (as in *year*, *yes*, &c.) is also considered by Wallis as an aspiration of the simple G, formed by a large and sudden aperture of the organs; but I am not entirely satisfied that this is the case.—In some other respects, his system

\* I have met with two persons, natives of Scotland, who did the same.

may perhaps be exceptionable : but, as it is ingenious and simple, and in many particulars true, I thought a brief account of it, interspersed with additional remarks, would give an idea of the manner in which the articulations of language are formed.

And now, we may ascertain the exact number of simple elementary sounds, which are heard in the language of England. Supposing H to mark, not an articulate voice, but only a breathing, (which is allowed by most grammarians to be its character) there will be found in the English tongue the following simple *consonant* sounds. 1. B, as in *ebb*. 2. D, as in *deed*. 3. F, as in *off*. 4. V, as in *of, love, velvet*. 5. G, as in *egg*. 6. K, as in *cook*. 7. L, as in *bell*. 8. M, as in *gem*. 9. N, as in *nun*. 10. P, as in *pope*. 11. R, as in *err*. 12. S, as in *as*. 13. Z, as in *zeal, laws, as*. 14. T, as in *it*. 15. W, as in *war, twang*. 16. Y, as in *you, yes, year*. 17. ING, as in *king*. 18. SH, as in *ash*. 19. TH, as in *thumb*. 20. TH, as in *then, though, this*. 21. ZH, as in the French pronoun *je*; as in *vision, derision, &c*; and as in the final sound of the complex consonant G, which is heard in the words *age, gem, George*, and which, as observed already, may be resolved into *dz*.

Of our other consonants, C is superfluous in both sounds, the one being expressed by K, and the other by S; G, in the soft pronunciation, is not a simple, but a complex sound; J is unnecessary, because its sound, and that of the soft G, are in our language the same; Q, with its attendant U, is either complex, and resolvable into Kw, as in *quality*, or unnecessary, because its sound is the same with K, as in *opaque*; X is compounded of gs, as in *exact, example*, or of ks, as in *exercise, Alexander*; PH is superfluous, because F gives the same sound; and CH is either compounded of *tsh* as in *church*, or simple, in which case it is superfluous, being the same with K, as in *cholera, chyle, archangel, character, stomach*.

Some think, that our *Y* and *W* are always vowel sounds, and that the one might be expressed by *I*, and the other by *U*. If this be admitted, the number of our simple consonants is reduced to nineteen. But this I think is a mistake.—It is true, that *I* is sometimes pronounced like the consonant *Y*, as in the last syllable of *oxion*, *opinion*, *William*; and *Y* like *I*, as at the end of a word, and when it follows a consonant, as in *liberty*, *my*, *thy*, *chyle*. It is also true, that in *persuade*, *suavity*, and some other words, the *u* has the exact sound of *w*; and that, in the end of some diphthongal syllables, the consonant *w* is put improperly for the vowel *u*, as in *flew*, *view*, &c.—But, on the other hand, when we articulate the consonant *y*, as in *yoke*, we begin, not with a vowel sound resembling *i* or *e*, but with a springy separation of the tongue from the palate, which opens a passage to a compressed or intercepted voice, and is, in the judgment of Wallis, an aspiration of the simple *G*. And, in pronouncing *war*, we begin, in like manner, not with an open mouth, or vowel sound like *u* or *oo*, but with separating, by a wide and circular aperture, those organs which, if they had remained in close contact, would have articulated the consonant *B*.—Besides, in analysing the sound of *qu*, as above, though I said, that it might be resolved into *kw*, I could not have said that it was resolvable into *ku*; for this would have implied, that *quality* (for example) was to be pronounced, not *kquality*, which is its real sound, but *kewality*.—To which may be added, that the Italians, who pronounce our vowel *u*, both when it is diphthongal, as in *muse*, *piutosto*, and when it is simple, as in *pull*, *rumore*, *uccello*, *udire*, cannot without difficulty learn to pronounce the English consonant *w*; which is a proof, that the articulations are different.

It appears then, that in the English tongue there are twenty one simple consonant sounds; and, according to Dr. Kenrick, there  
are



are eleven simple vowels. So that the elementary sounds of our language are no more than thirty two; or, reckoning H an articulation, thirty three.

In other languages however there may be many others. The French U was already taken notice of. He who articulates R in the throat, and with an aspiration, utters a sound never heard in England, but which is a Celtick or Erte word, and in the highlands of Scotland denotes a *horse*: and there they call a *calf* by a name, which I can neither describe nor articulate, but which seems to begin with an aspirated L. In the Scotch dialect there are two gutturals, CH, and GH, which are not in English; the Welch have many peculiar articulations: and if the language of the Hurons be, as is said, wholly guttural, its elementary sounds must be very unlike those of the European tongues.

## C H A P. III.

*The Alphabet imperfect, and Spelling irregular; but neither ought to be altered:—Pronunciation cannot be the standard of Orthography. — Of teaching the Deaf to speak. — Of Diphthongs, Syllables, Words. — Of long and short words.*

**I**N order to be perfect, the English alphabet ought, therefore, to consist of thirty three letters; namely, eleven vowels, and twenty two consonants: for, H, whether the symbol of a voice, or of a breathing, cannot be dispensed with, because in many words affecting the pronunciation. But it may be doubted, whether there ever was an alphabet so perfect, as to contain characters adapted to all the elementary sounds of a language, and not one more or fewer. In most alphabets, perhaps in all, there are both defects and superfluities.

Thus, in English, C, X, and Q are unnecessary; and we have no single character to mark the simple consonant sounds usually expressed by TH, SH, and NG. Our alphabet of vowels is particularly imperfect; three distinct sounds, or perhaps five, being signified by the first vowel letter, two or three by the second, two by the third, five by the fourth, and two or three by the fifth\*.

\* According to Kenrick, A has five sounds, which are heard in the words *bat, kate, hard, what, ball*: — E has three, as in *me, met, ker*: — I has two, as in *thin, thine*: — O has five, as in *no, not, soft, wolf, monk*: — U has three, as in *pull, up, muse*; which last, however, is not a simple vowel, but a diphthongal sound. — Y in *liberty* is a vowel; in *yonder*, a consonant; and in *by, thy, my*, a diphthong. According to Johnson, A has three sounds, as in *malt, father, pla.e*: E has two, as in *me, met*: I, two, as above: O, two, as in *got, drone*: and U, three, as above.

Hence different vowels are often used to denote one and the same sound. Thus in *cur*, *fir*, *her*, *monk*, the same vowel sound is heard, notwithstanding the diversity of the vowel letters: and in many words, vowels are seen, and consonants too, which have no sound at all; as E in *house*, A in *realm*, the second O in *honour*, UGH in *though*, G in *gnomon*, K in *knowledge*, W in *know*, *blow*, &c. To which I may add, that some of our diphthongs are marked by single vowels, as in the words, *use*, *mind*, *chyle*, *by*; and that we often use two vowel letters to signify a simple vowel sound, as in *head*, *blood*, *good*, &c. But these and the like imperfections are not peculiar to English, but obtain more or less in all the tongues of Europe, and probably in all written languages whatever.

Nor is there any thing wonderful in this. There are not in Great Britain two provinces, which do not differ in some particulars of pronunciation; and in most countries the modes of speech, especially while literature is in its infancy, are vague and changeable. Hence, when men begin to write their mother tongue, it may be supposed, that they will differ greatly in their spelling, and in their notions of the powers of the letters: and he, who is in other respects the most popular, will probably give the law in these particulars, however injudicious his spelling may be, and however inelegant his pronunciation. Then, a laudable regard to old authors, and to etymology, and a desire to fix the language, will determine succeeding writers to retain the old spelling, even when the pronunciation has become different. Thus, the final E in *house*, *horse*, &c. which was certainly pronounced in the age of Chaucer, and not wholly disused in that of Wallis, we still retain in writing, though it has been mute for more than a century. Nor have we laid aside the GH in the words, *light*, *bright*, *figh*, *though*, &c. (which was also pronounced in the antient language) notwithstanding

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ing that the guttural is now no more articulated in any part of the British empire, except Scotland. And, in the opinion of our best grammarians, the words *honour*, *author*, *orator*, &c. ought not to lose the *u* they have been so long possessed of, because they came to us, not from the Latin *honor*, *auctor*, *orator*, but from the French *honneur*, *auteur*, *orateur*.

Every thing deserves praise, which is done with a view to make language durable; for on the permanency of any tongue depends that of the literature conveyed in it. And if new words, new letters, or new modes of spelling, might be introduced at pleasure, language would soon be disfigured and altered; the old authors would ere long be laid aside as unintelligible, and the new would be consigned to oblivion before their time. Yet several attempts were made in the last century, to alter the spelling, and even the alphabet, of the English tongue. Sir Thomas Smith, Dr. Gill, and Charles Butler, thought it absurd to speak one way, and write another; and seem to have founded their respective plans of improvement upon this principle, that pronunciation ought to determine orthography: not considering that, as Dr. Johnson well observes, "this is to measure by a shadow, and take that for a  
 " model or standard, which is changing while they apply it." For, according to this rule, pronunciation ought to be uniform throughout the kingdom; which, however desirable, and however easy it may have appeared to some projectors, is, I fear, impracticable: and the alphabet, or the mode of spelling, must vary continually as the pronunciation varies; which would be a matter of such nicety, as no degree of human wisdom could regulate. Besides, reformations of this kind, supposed practicable, would obliterate etymology, and, with that, the remembrance of many old customs and sentiments, would take away from the significancy

of many important words, and involve in confusion both our grammar and our policy.

Let the language, therefore, be fixed, as much as possible, in the phraseology, spelling, and alphabet; even though in all the three respects it might have been better than it is. A change in any of them would be dangerous, and produce no other good effect, than that of making *the language now spoken* more easy to foreigners: for to them, as well as to natives, it would increase the difficulty of studying our literature in its full extent.—It may be said, indeed, that all our good authors might be transcribed or translated into the fashionable letters and syllables. But this could not be. We have no criterion, universally acknowledged, for distinguishing good authors from bad: we have no laws to warrant the annihilation of property in books and manuscripts: nor is it in the power of lawgivers, far less of philosophers, to make a whole people renounce the written language of their fathers, wherein they find no inconvenience, and which is their only security for a great part of their wealth, and adopt in its stead a system of cyphers and syllables, which they understand not, and of the utility of which they have had no experience\*. In a word, our language is the basis of British learning, as our laws are of the British government: if we value the superstructure, let us venerate the foundation, to which, if it is not composed of unsound materials, length of time will give more and more stability.

By attending to those motions of the articulating organs, whereby the elementary sounds of language are formed, ingenious men have contrived the art of teaching the deaf to speak.

\* The emperor Claudius, who though destitute of parts was not without ambition, aspired to the honour of introducing three new letters into the Roman alphabet. They were in use during his reign; but, as the historian expresses it, were soon after *oblitteratæ*. — *quæ usui imperitante eo, mox oblitteratæ, &c.* Tacit. Annal. lib. xi.

In order to this, the pupils are first taught to utter vocal sound, and to know when they utter it: which, as an eminent professor of the art informed me, is one of the most difficult parts of the whole procedure. For, as the scholar never heard any sound, it must be long before he is made to know what his master means when he desires him to exert his voice; and still longer, before he can either do what is desired, or know when, or how, he does it. Internal feeling, and external touch, must therefore supply the want of hearing. The voice is accompanied with certain perceptible tremors and tensions of the organs in the mouth and throat: and when the scholar has long been made attend to these, he comes at last to perceive, by the *tangible* effects of vocal sound, *when* he utters it, and *how*.

The next point is, to instruct him in articulation. So far as this is performed by *visible* contacts or applications of the organs, it is not difficult to conceive, by what steps he may be led to it. But many articulations depend upon the throat, the inner part of the nose, and other organs that in speaking are not visible. In regard to these, the pupils must receive information by touch. The master articulates a certain sound, and desires them to feel the tremors occasioned by it in his nose, and the adjoining parts; and then, after laying their hands on the same part of their faces, to utter a variety of sounds, by way of trial, till they come to utter that, which produces the same tremors in their own mouth and nostrils; giving them, at the same time, directions for the management of their tongue and lips; and illustrating the nature of the sound they are in quest of, by that of some other kindred sound wherewith they are already acquainted. And thus, after long time and much labour, they may be taught to articulate most of the sounds that are annexed to the several letters of the alphabet;

bet; and to join articulations together, so as to form syllables and words.

But this is not enough. They must also learn to distinguish the vocal sounds that are uttered by the person who speaks to them. This they cannot do by hearing, for they are deaf; nor by touch, for it would be unseemly, if they were to handle the nose, cheeks, and lips, of the speaker: it must therefore be done by sight. The speaker pronounces very slow, making a short pause at the end of each word, and gives a stronger energy than usual to the operation of every muscle that separates or brings together his organs: and the dumb man, looking him steadily in the face, which is exposed to the light, guesses at his words from the visible agitation of the several parts of his countenance.

It is obvious, that the acquisition of this talent must be extremely difficult, the exercise of it most laborious, and the words distinguishable by it very few. Nor is it possible, perhaps, for a dumb man ever to acquire such a readiness in it as shall give more pleasure than pain to his company, or be of any real benefit to himself. The time, therefore, that is employed by those unfortunate persons in this study, might, in my opinion, be more advantageously laid out, in acquiring the art of drawing, and the knowledge of written language, whereof they are very capable, together with the ready use of a convenient system of visible signs, or symbols, for the communication of thought.

It may to some appear strange at first hearing, that in the whole English tongue there should be no more than thirty two simple elementary sounds. But they, who know any thing of the powers of combined numbers, or who have considered in how many ways our elementary articulations may be formed into syllables and words, will not be surpris'd when they are told, that of these thirty two sounds hundreds of languages might be compos'd,

equally copious with the English, and all different from one another.

One of the simplest combinations in language is the Diphthong : which is formed, when two contiguous vowel sounds coalesce in such a manner, as that, though they form but one syllable, the sound of both, or at least a double sound, is distinctly heard; as *oy* in *joy*, *ow* in *cow*, *ui* in *juice*. A diphthong is sometimes marked by three letters, as *eau* in *beauty*, *ieu* in *lieu*; and sometimes by one vowel letter, as *u* in *muse*, *i* in *mind*, *y* in *style*: but it derives its name, and nature, from its sound, and not from its letters: for the word *diphthong* denotes a double vowel sound; and whatever marks the coalition of two distinct vowel sounds, whether it be two letters, or three, or one, is really the mark of a diphthong. And when a monophthong; or simple vowel sound, is marked by two vowel letters, as *oo* in *good*, *ea* in *bread*; or by three, as *eau* in *beau*; the combination is not a diphthong, though it may be called a double or treble vowel.

Grammarians, indeed, speak of triphthongs, or three monophthongal sounds coalescing in one syllable; and give *eye* and *beau* as examples. But, notwithstanding the number of the letters, *eye* is as much a diphthong as *i* in *mind*, or as our affirmative particle *ay*, (though in pronouncing the latter a peculiar stress is laid upon the sound of the first vowel); and *eau* in *beau* is as truly a monophthong, as the interjection *O*.—Some triphthongs, however, there are in English, though but few; and those, I think, are marked by a single vowel letter. Such are the sounds annexed to the vowels in the words *sky* and *kind*: in which, the diphthong expressed by *y* in the one, and *i* in the other, is apparently introduced, in pronunciation, with something of the sound of the English *e* as heard in the words *be*, *she*, *be*.

And



And here I must take notice of a slight inaccuracy, which many Grammarians both Latin and English have fallen into. The former tell us, and indeed with truth, that æ and œ are diphthongs, and yet in speaking Latin make them simple vowel sounds; and the latter refer to the class of diphthongs *oo* in *good*, *ea* in *head*, *bread*, *realm*, and *ai* in *vain*, *plain*, &c; though the pronunciation of these is as truly monophthongal, or simple, as that of *u* in *pull*; *e* in *bed*, *bred*, *helm*; and *a* in *plane*, *vane*. In this particular, therefore, the Latin grammarian ought to reform his pronunciation; and the English, his account of the diphthong. For, that the Romans pronounced æ and œ as double vowel sounds; the first similar to our affirmative particle *ay*, and the last not unlike *oi* in *voice*, cannot, I think, be doubted. The first is sometimes resolved, by their best versifiers Lucretius and Virgil, into two syllables, *materiæ* into *materiâi*, *aulæ* into *aulâi*; which I presume would not have been done, if the sound had been, as we make it, perfectly monophthongal. Nor, if they had pronounced *Cæsar*, as we do, *Cesar* or *Kesar*, is it to be imagined that the Greeks would have expressed the vowel sound of the first syllable of that name by two vowel letters *Kaisar*. Nor would the Romans have transformed the Greek \* *πεινέ* into *pæna*, or † *Φιλοποιμέν* into *Philopæmen*, if they had not pronounced *æ* as a diphthong. But this by the by.

Consonants, by being joined to consonants, produce many combinations of articulate sound; and simple vowels, and diphthongs, may be joined to single, or double, or treble consonants; and thus an endless variety of syllables may be formed: and a syllable may be joined to other syllables, or stand by itself, so as to form short or long words; and each vowel sound may be long, or short, and vary

\* *πεινέ*† *Φιλοποιμέν*

the import of the syllable accordingly. So that, though the number of elementary sounds is not great in any language, the variety of *possible* words, that may be formed by combining them, is in every language so great, as almost to exceed computation, and much more than sufficient to express all the varieties of human thought. But the *real* words, even of the most copious language, may without difficulty be numbered; for a good dictionary comprehends them all. In the English tongue, after deducting proper names, and the inflections of our verbs and nouns, I have reason to think, that they do not exceed forty thousand.

We must not, however, estimate the number of our ideas by that of our words; the former being beyond comparison more diversified than the latter. Many thoughts we express, not by particular terms appropriated to each, but by a periphrasis, or combination of terms, which under different forms of arrangement and connection may be applied to a great variety of different purposes; and many thoughts are communicated in tropes and figures; and many may sometimes be signified by one and the same word. There are few terms in language that have not more than one meaning; some have several, and some a great number. In how many different ways, and to how many different purposes, may the verbs *do*, *lie*, *lay*, and *take*, (for example) be applied! Johnson's Dictionary will show this, and much more of the same kind; and leave the reader equally astonished at the acuteness of the lexicographer, and at the complex nature and use of certain minute parts of human speech. Even of our prepositions (as will be observed hereafter) one has upwards of twelve, one more than twenty, and one no fewer than thirty different meanings. And yet, when we understand a language, we are not sensible of any perplexity arising from these circumstances: all ambiguities of sense being, in a  
correct

correct style, prevented by what Horace calls *Callida junctura*, that is, by a right arrangement of the words, and other artifices of composition.

The quantity of distinct speech that we pronounce with one effort of the articulating organs is called a *syllable*. In every syllable there must be one vowel sound at least; because without an opening of the mouth there can be no distinct articulation. A syllable may be a single vowel, as *a*, *o*; or a single diphthong, as *ay*, *oi*; or either of these modified by one or more consonants, placed before it, or after it, or on both sides of it:— as *to*, *of*; *boy*, *cyl*; *dog*, *foil*; *dry*, *art*; *swift*, *broils*, *strength*.

Language is made up of words; and words are the smallest divisions of speech that have signification. Syllables, as such, have no meaning; for a significant syllable is a word. Every word means something, either of itself, or as joined to other words; and words derive their meaning from the consent and practice of those who use them.

If one were to contrive a new language, one might make any articulate sound the sign of any idea: there would be no impropriety in calling oxen *men*, or rational beings by the name of *oxen*. But where a language is already formed, they who speak it must use words in the customary sense. By doing otherwise, they incur the charge, either of affectation, if they mean only to be remarkable, or of falsehood, if they mean to deceive. To speak as others speak, is one of those tacit obligations, annexed to the condition of living in society, which we are bound in conscience to fulfil, though we have never ratified them by any express promise; because, if they were disregarded, society would be impossible, and human happiness at an end. It is true, that, in a book of science founded on definition, words may be used in any sense, provided their meaning be explained: in this case there is no falsehood, because there is no  
intention

intention to deceive: but, even in this case, if the common analogies of language were violated, the author would be justly blamed for giving unnecessary trouble to his readers, and for endeavouring capriciously to abrogate a custom, which universal use had rendered more respectable, as well as more convenient, than any other that he could substitute in its room.

A word may be a single syllable; or it may consist of two, or of several syllables. Hence, in respect of length, as well as of sound, words admit of great variety.

Some have said, that the words of barbarous nations are very long; and that, as most nations have at one time or other been barbarous, most primitive tongues in their uncultivated state are remarkable for the extraordinary length of their words; but that, by refinement, and practice in speaking and writing, these come in time to be abridged, and made more manageable. And it cannot be denied, that into common discourse abbreviations of words are gradually introduced, which were not at first in the language.— But we find, that the radical words of antient tongues are rather short than long. This is true of the Hebrew, and is said to be true of the Chinese. In the Greek and Latin, though some inflections of compound verbs shoot out to a great length, the primitive verbs, nouns, pronouns, and the most essential particles, are comparatively short. Of the English too it has been observed, that its fundamental words of Saxon original are most of them monosyllables. And though some words of inconvenient magnitude may be found in every tongue, as *notwithstanding* and *nevertheless* in English, *verum enim vero* in Latin, and *conciosfacosache* in Italian, (which by the by are made up of short words joined together) yet it does not appear, that words are always improved by being shortened. On the contrary, our English abbreviations *dont*, *cant*,

*shant*, &c. though they have long been used in conversation, are to this day intolerable in solemn style.

Travellers, indeed, inform us of certain words of monstrous length, that are current in savage nations; that, for example, in the dialect of the Esquimaux, *wonnaweucktuckluit* signifies *much*; and that, on the banks of the river Orcllana in South America, the number *three* is denoted by a word of twenty letters, *poetazza-rorincouroac*. But is it certain, that those travellers did not hear a sentence, a circumlocution, or a description, when they imagined they were hearing a single word? — *A very great quantity* is a phrase of the same import with *much*; and *the third part of the number nine* is a periphrasis for *three*. Suppose a foreigner, passionately fond of the marvellous, and who had formed a theory concerning long words, and was determined to find them among us as well as in South America, should, after a week's residence in London, take it in his head that the English expresses *three* by a word of twenty-seven letters, and *much* by another of eighteen: would not such a mistake be natural enough in such a person? — It is, I think, very improbable, that long words should abound among barbarians. For short ones are more obvious, and less troublesome, and are withal capable of sufficient variety. And we cannot imagine, that they, whose garments are but a rag, and whose lodgings a hole, should affect superfluities in their language.

Long words are said to give dignity to language, and short ones to be detrimental to harmony. And there is truth in the remark; but it must not be admitted without limitation. Many long ones render language heavy and unwieldy: and short ones are not harsh, unless where, by beginning or ending with hard consonants, they refuse to coalesce with the letters that go before or follow. For, in pronunciation, the voice does not make a pause at the end of every word; and when two or three little words run easily into one another,

another, the effect in point of harmony is the same, as if one word of several syllables were spoken, instead of several words of one syllable. And therefore English lines of monosyllables, though some criticks condemn them in poetry as dissonant, *may* flow as easily and sweetly as any other: as,

I live in hope, that all will yet be well.—

Arms and the man I sing, who forced by fate.—

And I know not whether there be in the whole language a smoother paragraph than the following; in which, of eighty two words sixty nine are monosyllables. — “ My beloved spake, and said unto  
“ me, Rise up my Love, my fair one, and come away: For lo,  
“ the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers  
“ appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come,  
“ and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: The fig-tree  
“ putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender  
“ grape give a good smell: Arise, my Love, my fair one, and  
“ come away.”

The truth is, that a mixture of shorter with longer words may be necessary to harmony: but, in our language, a better sound is heard from many short words of Saxon original, if their initial and final articulations admit of an easy coalescence, than from a redundancy of long words derived from the Greek and Latin. For in English, though there is much Latin, and some Greek, yet the Saxon predominates; and its sounds are most acceptable to a British ear, because most familiar. And hence, with all its ease and apparent carelessness, the prose of Dryden is incomparably more melodious, than that of the learned and elaborate Sir Thomas Brown. For the former adheres, where he can, to plain words of English or Saxon growth; while the other is continually dragging in gigantick terms of Greek or Latin etymology.

If a language were to be invented, and words lengthened and shortened upon principles of philosophy, there can be no doubt, that such as either have little meaning of their own, as articles, conjunctions, and prepositions, or continually recur in speaking and writing, as auxiliary verbs and personal pronouns, ought to be short; and that other words, of more important meaning, or less necessary use, may admit of a more complex articulation\*. And in fact, though languages are formed gradually; and though their formation, depending upon causes too minute to be perceived, is said to be accidental, or by chance; yet we find, that this principle has influence in most nations. Personal pronouns, articles, and auxiliary words, are commonly short; and though some conjunctions are of unwieldy magnitude, the most necessary ones are manageable enough.

\* See Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric. Book iii. chap. 4.

## C H A P. IV.

*Of Emphasis, 1. Rhetorical. 2. Syllabick, which is either Long-vowelled, or Short-vowelled. — Of the Numbers or measures of English Poetry, as depending on Emphasis; their nature, and varieties.*

WORDS alone do not constitute speech. To all the languages we know, and probably to all others, belong *Emphasis* and *Accent*; whose nature and use may be explained as follows.

EMPHASIS, which is a stronger exertion of the voice upon some words and syllables than upon others, is necessary, to give spirit and propriety to pronunciation, by marking, first, the most important words in a sentence; and, secondly, those syllables in a word, which custom may have distinguished by a more forcible utterance.

First: to show the necessity of pronouncing some words of a sentence with a stronger emphasis than others, let us make a trial upon the several parts of this brief interrogatory, Do you walk to town to-day? \* — and we shall find, that every variation of the emphasis gives a different meaning to the question, and requires a different answer. If we exert our voice upon the pronoun, and say, “Do *you* walk to town to-day?” the answer might be, “No, but my servant does.” If it be laid, “Do you *walk* to town to-day?”—it may be answered, “No, I shall ride.” Let the question be, “Do you walk *to town* to-day?”—the answer, if negative, may be, “No, I shall go down into the country.” Lastly, if we

\* See the Preceptor, vol. i. page 43. Introduction.



were asked, "Do you walk to town *to-day*?"—we should perhaps answer, "No, but I shall *to-morrow*." Again, let the emphasis be twice applied, "Do you *walk* to town *to-day*?"—and an answer containing a double emphasis may perhaps be requisite; "No, "I shall *ride* thither *to-morrow*." And if the same words were addressed to us without any emphasis on the part of the speaker, we should be at a loss what to answer, because his meaning would appear ambiguous.

One of the greatest niceties in the art of reading is the right application of the emphasis. And of this they only are capable, who perfectly understand what they read, and attend to the full import of every clause, and of every word. If we read without understanding, or without attention, we continually misapply the emphasis; and the hearer, if he is not very acute, must often mistake the sense. And therefore I am surpris'd, that Milton did not contrive a better expedient for supplying his loss of sight, than that of making his daughters read to him in Latin, Italian, Greek, and Hebrew; languages, whereof he had not taught them to know any thing but the letters. A hearer of ordinary talents could not put up with a reader who affixes no idea to what he articulates. Such readers must either puzzle, when they do not apply emphasis, or mislead, when they misapply it. But Milton's memory and learning were almost as wonderful as his genius: and, after he grew blind, it is not likely, that he would desire to hear any foreign books read to him, but such as he was well acquainted with.

Children are not often taught to read with the proper emphasis. Indeed, when books are put before them which they do not understand, it is impossible they should. Let them, therefore, read nothing but what is level to their capacity; let them read slowly, and with attention to the meaning of every word; and let them be

not only set right when they misapply the emphasis, but also cautioned against the opposite extremes of too forcible and too feeble an application of it; for by the former of these faults they become affected in their utterance, and by the latter insipid. I may add, that the pronunciation ought not to be equally emphatical on all subjects. If we rehearse the words of sorrow, humility, or love, a soft emphasis, being the most natural, is the most graceful and expressive; but a more vigorous energy should enforce the language of indignation, contempt, or earnest remonstrance. Moderation, however, is necessary in this as in other things. For when articulation becomes strictly imitative, it is called theatrical, and gives offence in domestick life, because inconsistent with that modesty, which forms an essential part of true politeness. — Of the bad effects of theatrical imitation in the pulpit, I have spoken in another place\*.

Hitherto we have considered emphasis as affecting the pronunciation of *words*; and this may be called the *rhetorical emphasis*. I now remark, in the second place, that there are also *emphatick syllables*. In most words of more than one syllable, the voice is more vigorously exerted, and dwells longer, upon some of the component sounds, than upon others; as upon the first of *blameless*, the second of *revenge*, and the third of *reconcile*. — Moreover, the first and third syllables of the word *melancholy* are pronounced more strongly, though not more slowly, than the second and fourth: and of the word *dissipation* the first syllable has a forcible and quick utterance, and the third is forcible and slow.

For, in our tongue, there are two sorts of syllabick emphasis. The one, terminating in a consonant, is formed by a stronger or smarter exertion of the voice: the other, which frequently ends in a vowel or diphthong, is distinguished by a longer continuance, as

\* Essay on Memory, chap. 3.

well as by a powerful energy. Thus the first syllable of *studious* and of *nation* is emphatical and long; but the first syllable of *study*, and of *passion*, though emphatical, is not long.

This, however obvious, has not always been attended to. In most English Dictionaries, prior to that of Dr. Kenrick, the emphatick syllable has the same mark, whether it be long or short: nay, some grammarians have told us, that the emphatick syllable in English is always long. But he, who compares the first syllable of *nation* with the first syllable of *passion*, will observe, that, though both are emphatical, the former is long and ends in a vowel sound, and that the latter is short or quick, and ends in the consonant S. — It is true, that the long emphatick syllable often ends in a consonant sound, as in *severe*, *redeem*, *divine*, *benign*; but in this case, it is still the vowel or diphthong that is lengthened. — It is also true, that the other syllabick emphasis is sometimes long, as in *event*, *neglect*; but here the vowel is obviously short, and the protracted sound rests upon the consonants, and is owing to their duplicity, which forms a collision of the articulating organs, and a necessary delay in the pronunciation. Syllables of this latter sort are by the Latin grammarians said to be *long by position*.

Emphatick syllables are by some called *accented*; which is improper; *accent* being a thing totally different, as will appear hereafter. And therefore, on account of their reference to accent or tone, the epithets *acute* and *grave*, whereby one author distinguishes the two sorts of syllabick emphasis, must be rejected.

If it be asked, in what respects they are necessary or useful in language; I answer, first, that, by their means, one and the same word may be applied without inconvenience to different purposes: which, though not very material perhaps, is however of some benefit. Thus *ref-use* is a noun, and *re-fuse* a verb; and the same distinction

distinction holds in *ſubjēct* and *ſubjēct*, *inſult* and *inſult*, *cōnvērt* and *cōnvērt*, and many others.

But, ſecondly, Emphatick ſyllables are ſtill more uſeful, as on them depends, in a great meaſure, at leaſt in the modern tongues, and particularly in Engliſh, thoſe varieties in the ſound and motion of contiguous ſyllables, which give riſe to rhythm \* and poetical harmony. Nay, whether it be owing to the very act of breathing, or to habits we have contracted in the uſe of our mother tongue, we find it almoſt impoſſible to pronounce a number of ſignificant ſyllables, without giving more emphasis to ſome than to others. Pronunciation without emphasis, or the voice applied with equal force upon every ſyllable, would ſound very uncouth to our ear, and ſeem to reſemble articulations produced by mechanism, rather than the ſpeech of an intelligent being. Without emphasis even muſick would be inſipid and inexpressive.

The Greeks and Romans were determined, in the formation of their poetical meaſures, by the *quantity*, that is, by the proportion of time, in which their ſyllables were pronounced. In this reſpect, they divided them into long and ſhort. A ſhort and a long ſyllable made what they called the Iambick foot; and fix Iambick feet, or a ſhort and a long ſyllable fix times repeated, formed their Iambick Trimeter, whereof the following line of Horace, when rightly pronounced according to the *quantity*, is an example,

Bēātūs illē qūī prōcūl nēgōtīīs.

Two long ſyllables made the foot Spondeus, and a long and two

\* Rhythm is that peculiar movement, of the notes in muſick, and of the ſyllables in poetry, which may be imitated by the drum, or by the fingers ſtriking on a board. There is rhythm even in proſe: as the continuities and intermiſſions of the voice in ſpeaking, and the variations ariſing from long and ſhort, or from emphatick and non-emphatick, ſyllables, may all be imitated in the ſame manner. Of the effects of rhythm in muſick, ſee an *Eſſay on Poetry and Muſick*. Part i. chap. 6. ſect. 2. § 4.

ſhort

short the Dactyl: and the verse called Hexameter consisted of six feet, whereof any one of the first four might be either a Dactyl or a Spondee, the fifth was a dactyl, and a spondee the last. And thus, the iambick foot comprehending the time of three short syllables, and the hexameter feet being each of them equal to four short, or two long; it appears that the divisions of the former were (to adopt a term of modern musick) in *treble time*, and those of the latter in *common time*.

But on what does the measure of English verse depend? — Some have said, on the number of syllables. But that is a mistake. — The three following lines are of the same Iambick species; and yet, the first consists of ten, the second of nine, and the third of eight, syllables:

And many a youth, and many a maid  
Were dancing in the neighbouring shade,  
In holiday attire array'd.

Of these four lines the first and third have eight syllables, and the second and fourth have nine; yet the measure is the same throughout;

Yet do not my folly reprove;  
She was fair, and my passion begun;  
She smiled, and I could not but love;  
She is faithless, and I am undone.

The four that follow might all stand in the same verse of the same song, and be sung to the same tune, though in the first there are eleven syllables, in the second twelve, thirteen in the third, and fourteen in the last.

And when I am gone, may the better sort say,  
He had sense, he was modest, and harmlessly gay,  
And a kind, unaffected, and good honest fellow,  
In the morning when sober, in the evening when mellow.

Our

Our heroick verse, too, may consist of ten syllables (which is the simplest and most common form of it) or of eleven, or of twelve: as,

Arms and the man I sing, who forced by fate. —

Bellowing along the plains the monster ran. —

Many a wide lawn, and many a waving grove. —

The following has been given, as a heroick line of fourteen syllables,

And many an humourous, many an amorous lay.

And, admitting a supernumerary syllable, the second line of this couplet might be tolerated, though it has fifteen :

The hapless poet pen'd, alas! for pity,

Full many an amorous, many a querulous ditty.

It has indeed been thought by some criticks, that in our heroick verse, when the syllables exceed ten in number, there must be redundant vowels, which in reading are suppressed or cut off, and instead of which, in printed books, the apostrophe is often inserted. But, whatever be the case in printing, and writing, this is contrary to the practice of all good readers; who pronounce every syllable distinctly, and by so doing gratify our ear much more than if they had made the supposed elisions. For, how ridiculous would it be, if one were to read the last line thus!

Full man' an am'rous, man' a quer'lous ditty.

This might indeed be called measure, but it could not be called English.

Some have imagined, that the rhythm of our verse depends, like that of the Greek and Latin, not upon the number, but upon the *quantity*, of syllables. And it is true, that an English heroick line may be made up of a short and long syllable five times repeated; in which case we may say, without any impropriety, that it is a pure Iambick of five feet: as,

Dēspair, rēvēnge, rēmōrse tōrmēnt thē sōul.

But

But it is no less true, that an English heroick line *may* be composed, wherein there shall not be one long syllable, except the last: as,

The busy bodies flutter tattic still.

Whatever may be said of this line in other respects, it will at least be allowed to be of the English heroick species: and yet, if we were to pronounce the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth syllables as if they were long, the articulation would be ridiculous:

The buzz-y bode-ies flutt-er tatt-le still.

I grant, that those heroick lines, which abound in syllables that are at once emphatical and short, are not so proper for expressing sentiments or images of dignity: yet still they are of the heroick species; and no critick will say, that they are inconsistent with rule, or not justifiable by authority.

On what then does the measure of English verses depend? Not on the *number* of the syllables, as we have seen: nor on their *quantity*; since an English heroick line may consist of five short and five long syllables, or of nine short and one long syllable. — In fact, this matter is regulated by the *emphasis*. In our verse, there must be in every foot one emphatick syllable whether long or short. And the alternate succession of emphatick and non-emphatick syllables is as essential to English numbers, as that of long and short is to the Latin and Greek. — Thus in that line,

The busy bodies flutter tattle still,

though there is not one long syllable till you come to the end, there are five emphatick syllables, each of them preceded by a syllable of no emphasis. And in the other line,

Despair, remorse, revenge, torment the soul,

there are also five emphatick syllables, each preceded by a non-emphatick syllable.

In what respect, then, do these two lines (which are allowed to be of the same species) resemble each other, and in what respect do they differ? They differ in this respect, that one is made up of short and long syllables alternately disposed, while the other has in it only one long syllable: They agree in this, that both the one and the other is composed of non-emphatick and emphatick syllables placed alternately. It follows, that, though long and short, or short and long, syllables *may sometimes* form the rhythm of English verse, yet that which *invariably* and *essentially* forms it, is the interchange of emphatick and non-emphatick syllables.

In lines, that are intended to imitate the sense by the articulation, or to be remarkably concise and significant, an exuberance of emphatick syllables may sometimes be found. But such lines, whatever merit they may have in respect of energy, are not well-tuned; and perhaps could hardly be known to be verse, if we did not find them among other verses. The imperfection of their harmony, however, we overlook, if they have any other beauty to counterbalance it. Such is this of Milton:

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death.  
And such is that, in a late Prologue, which I have heard Mrs. Abingdon pronounce very humourously:

Some great fat wife of some great fat shopkeeper.

Our language abounds in words of one syllable, many of which, being of ambiguous quantity, have no other emphasis, but the rhetorical, which is fixed upon them by the sense. In lines of monosyllables, therefore, that are well-tuned, those words, which by the rule of the verse would have the syllabick emphasis, have also the rhetorical emphasis from the importance of their signification. If we were to mistake the following line for prose,—

The sun was set, and all the plains were still,



yet, if we read it with understanding, the rhetorical emphasis, coinciding with the syllabick, and having indeed the same effect, would prove it to be poetical, and of the heroick species.

I shall conclude this part of the subject with two remarks. The first is, that though our poetry derives its measure from the emphasis of syllables, and the Greek and Latin theirs from the quantity, we must not look upon the former as barbarous, and upon the latter as alone susceptible of true harmony: the only inference we can reasonably make is, that Greek and Latin verses are more uniform than ours in respect of time. The rhythm of sounds may be marked by the distinction of loud and soft, as well as by that of long and short. Every nation has a right to determine for itself in these matters; and it is probable, that the English numbers are as delightful to us, as the Latin and Greek were to the Romans and Grecians. In like manner, though rhimes are intolerable in ancient poetry, it does not follow, that they are contemptible in themselves: most modern nations have them, and children and peasants are charmed with them; which could not be, if they had not in certain circumstances the power of pleasing.

My second remark is, that though those terms in ancient grammar, *trocheus*, *iambus*, *dactylus*, *anapestus*, *spondæus*, &c. do properly signify certain limited arrangements of *long* and *short* syllables, it can do no harm to adopt them in English prosody. For our emphatick syllables are often long, and our non-emphatick syllables are often short; and where this is the case, we use these terms without impropriety. And where this is not the case, if we call that foot a *trochee* (for example) which consists of an emphatick and non-emphatick syllable, both of them short, as *body*, we do not depart from the original meaning of words more than is frequently done, without blame, on other occasions.

In fact, the customs of different countries are so different, that

when we borrow words from a foreign tongue, it is not always possible to confine them to their primitive sense. With us, an *advocate* is one who pleads a cause in a court of judicature. An advocate in antient Rome was one, who assisted with his countenance and advice the person who was obliged to appear before the judges, whether he spoke in his behalf or not.

Let us then have our trochees, iambuses, and anapests, and our trochaick, iambick, and anapestick measures: only let it be remembered, that, in English prosody, a trochee is either a long and short, (as *lowly*), or an emphatick and non-emphatick, syllable, (as *body*); an iambus, the reverse, as *renown, repel*; an anapest, an iambus preceded by a short syllable, as *magazine*; and a dactyl, a trochee followed by a short syllable, as *thunderer, profligate*.

As our poetical numbers depend upon the alternate succession of emphatick and non-emphatick syllables, it may be proper, before I proceed to the subject of *accent*, to give some account of the various sorts of measure, that have been established in English poetry; in describing which, I must be understood to use the words trochee, iambus, dactyl, and anapest, in the sense just now explained. And I shall take the liberty to mark our *rhythmical emphasis* and *the want of it*, by the same characters, which in Latin prosody denote *long* and *short* syllables.

English poetical measure may be divided into four kinds, Dactyllick, Iambick, Trochaick, and *Anapestick*.

I. The Dactyllick measure being very uncommon, I shall give only one example of one species of it, which I find in Dryden's *Albion and Albanus*.

From the low palace of old father Ocean  
Come we in pity your cares to deplore;  
Sea-racing dolphins are train'd for our motion,  
Moony tides swelling to roll us ashore.

II. The

II. The Iambick is of all measures the most natural; for, as Aristotle observes, we often fall into it in our ordinary discourse. Greek and Latin hexameters, and our own trochaick and anapestick numbers, are more artificial, because more unlike the cadences of conversation. Our Iambicks we may subdivide into species, according to the number of feet or syllables whereof they consist; and I shall follow the same rule of arrangement in describing the other measures.

1. The shortest form of the English Iambick consists of an iambus with an additional short syllable; as

Disdaining,  
Complaining,  
Consenting,  
Repenting.

We have no poem of this measure, but it may be met with in stanzas. The example is taken from a song in the mask of Comus.

2. The second form of our Iambick is also too short to be continued through any great number of lines; though in the following example it has a very good effect. It consists of two iamбусes.

With rāvish'd tēars  
The monarch hears,  
Ass-umes the God,  
Af-fects to nod.

It sometimes takes, or may take, an additional short syllable; as,

Ūpōn ā mōūntāin  
Beside a fountain.

3. The third form consists of three iamбусes:

Nō wār, ōr bāttle's sōūnd,  
Was heard the world a-round.

with sometimes an additional short syllable; as,

Yē lāys nō lōngēr lāngūīsh,  
For nought can cure my anguīsh.

4. The fourth form is made up of four iambuses, with sometimes an additional syllable, which gives a pleasing variety.

Or whēthēr, ās fōme fāgēs fīng,  
The frolick wind, that breathes the spring,  
Young Zephyr with Aurora playing, &c.

This measure, which we use both in burlesque and in serious poetry, is the same with the Iambick Dimeter of the antients; whereof, in its purest form, this is an example:

Īnārīt ācētūōsīūs.

5. The fifth species of English Iambick is no other than our common measure for heroick poetry and tragedy. In its purest, or simplest, form it consists of five iambuses:

Thē dūmb shāl fīng, thē lame hīs crūch fōregō.

but, by the admission of other feet, as trochees, dactyls, and anapests, is capable of more than thirty varieties. Indeed, most of our common measures may be varied in the same way, as well as by the different position of their pauses. And such varieties, when skilfully introduced, give wonderful energy to English, Greek, and Latin numbers; and have, for this reason, been studiously sought after by Homer, Virgil, Milton, Dryden, and all other harmonious poets: variety being the soul of harmony, and nothing in language or in musick more tiresome to the ear than an uniform sameness of sound and measure. — Our heroick verse is sometimes lengthened out by an additional short syllable, and then becomes nearly the same with that of the modern Italians.

'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter.—

Che 'l gran sepolchro liberò di Christo.

But in English, this is more common in blank verse, than in rhyme; and in tragedy, than in the epick or didactick poem; and among tragedians it is less fashionable now, than it was formerly.

6. The

6. The sixth form of our Iambick is commonly called the Alexandrine measure; because, say the criticks, (but on what authority I know not) it was first used in a poem called Alexander. It consists of six iambuses.

För thōū ärt büt öf düft; bë hūmblē, ānd bë wīfe.

It is introduced sometimes in heroick rhyme; and, when sparingly, and with judgment, occasions an agreeable variety.

Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine.

Spenser makes it the last line of his great stanza; where indeed it has a very happy effect. By the same artifice, Milton gives superlative elevation to some of his stanzas on the Nativity:

But first to those ychain'd in sleep

The wakeful trump of doom shall thunder through the deep.

and Gray, to the endings of his Pindarick measures. This verse is generally pleasing, when it concludes a poetical sentence of dignity: as where the aged champion in Dryden's Virgil resigns his arms, with a resolution not to resume them any more:

Take the last gift these wither'd arms can yield,

Thy gauntlets I resign, and here renounce the field.

In measure and number of feet it is the same with the pure Iambick trimeter of the Greeks and Romans; of which every second line of the sixteenth epode of Horace is an example:

Sūs et īplā Rōmā vīībūs rūit.

Some criticks confound our Alexandrine with the French heroick verse. But the latter, though it sometimes contains the same number of syllables, is not Iambick at all, but rather Anapestick, having for the most part two short for one long syllable, and in rhythm corresponds nearly to the following:

Now

Now see, when they meet, how their honours behave :

Noble captain, your servant : Sir Arthur, your slave.

Pray how does my lady? My wife's at your service.

I think I have seen her picture by Jervis.

The Alexandrine, like other English Iambicks, may occasionally take an additional short syllable :

With freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy.

7. The seventh and last form of our Iambick measure is made up of seven iambuses :

The Lord descended from above, and bow'd the heavens high, which was antiently written in one line ; but is now for the most part broken into two, the first containing four feet, and the second three. Chapman's translation of Homer's Iliad is the longest work I have seen in this measure. It is now considered as a Lyrick verse ; and is very popular, and indeed very pleasing.

III. The shortest Trochaick verse in our language is that used by Swift in a burlesque poem called a Lilliputian Ode, consisting of one trochee and a long syllable.

In amaze

Loft I gaze.

This measure is totally void of dignity, and cannot be used on any serious occasion. I am therefore surpris'd, that Brown, in his excellent ode on the Cure of Saul, should have adopted it in a speech ascribed to the Supreme Being :

Tumult cease.

Sink to peace.

2. The second English form of the pure Trochaick consists of two feet, and is likewise too brief for any serious purpose ;

On the mountain,

By a fountain :

or of two feet and an additional long syllable :

In the dāys of old  
 Stories plainly told  
 Lovers felt annoy.

These three lines are from an old ballad: the measure is very uncommon.

3. The third species consists of three trochees;

Whēn the scās wēre rōāring,  
 Phyllis lay deploring:

or of three trochees with an additional long syllable;

Thēc the vōice the dānce obey.

This is often mixed with the Iambick of four feet, and makes an agreeable variety, when judiciously introduced, as in the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* of Milton;

*Iamb.* But come, thou goddess fair and free,  
 In heaven ycleped Euphrosyne.

*Troch.* Come, and trip it as you go;  
 On the light fantastick toe.

4. The fourth Trochaick species consists of four trochees:

Days of ease and nights of pleāsūre.

Which followed alternately by the preceding, forms a beautiful Lyrick verse, whereof we have a specimen in one of the finest ballads in the English language:

As near Pōrtōbēllō lȳing Ōn the gēntly swēlling flōōd  
 At midnight with streamers flying Our triumphant navy rode.

It is remarkable, that (as Mr. West has somewhere observed) the same measure occurs in the Greek tragedians, as in this of Euripides:

\* Προσκυνῶ σ' ἀναξ ἡμίσι βαρβαροῖσι προσπίσαν.

And there is an elegant Latin poem called *Peruigilium Veneris*, commonly ascribed to Catullus; of which, allowing for some

\* Προσκυνῶ σ' ἀναξ ἡμίσι βαρβαροῖσι προσπίσαν.

varieties incident to the Latin Trochaick verse, the measure is the same :

Ver novum, ver jam canorum ; vere nubent alites ;

Vere concordant amores ; vere natus orbis est.

With an additional long syllable, our fourth Trochaick species would be as follows :

Idle, after dinner, in his chair,

Sat a farmer, ruddy, fat, and fair.

But this measure is very uncommon.

5. So is the fifth Trochaick species, consisting of five trochees ; whereof I do not remember to have seen a specimen in any printed poem.

All that walk on foot or ride in chariots,

All that dwell in palaces or garrets.

This sort of verse, with an additional long syllable, might be thus exemplified :

Pleasant was the morning, and the month was May,

Colin went to London in his best array.

Some Scotch ballads are in this measure ; but I know not whether I have ever seen a specimen in English.

6. The sixth form of the pure English Trochaick consists of six trochees ; whereof the following couplet is an example :

On a mountain stretch'd beneath a hoary willow

Lay a shepherd swain, and view'd the rolling billow.

which is, I think, the longest Trochaick line that our language admits of.

IV. The shortest possible Anapestick verse must be a single anapest :

But in vain

They complain.

But



But this measure is ambiguous: for, by laying the emphasis on the first and third syllables, we might make it Trochaick. And therefore the first and simplest form of our anapestick verse is made up of two anapests :

Būt hīs cōūrāge gān fāil,  
For no arts could avail.

or of two anapests with an additional short syllable :

Thēn hīs cōūrāge gān fāil hīm,  
For no arts could avail him.

2. The second consists of three anapests :

With hēr mīēn shē ēnāmoūrs thē brāve,  
With her wit she engages the free,  
With her modesty pleases the grave;  
She is every way pleasing to me.

This is a delightful measure, and much used in pastoral songs. Shenstone's ballad in four parts, from which the example is quoted, is an exquisite specimen. So is the Scotch ballad of *Tweedside*, and Rowe's *Despairing beside a clear stream*; which last is perhaps the finest love-song in the world. And that the same measure is well suited to burlesque, appears from the very humorous ballad called *The tippling Philosophers*; which begins thus, *Diogenes surly and proud*, &c. — Observe, that this, like all the other anapestick forms, often (indeed for the most part) takes an iambus in the first place,

Dēspāirīng bēsīde ā clēar strēām;  
and formerly in the first and third,  
Gřim kīng ōf thē ghōsts, māke hāste  
And bring hither all your train :

But this last variety is unpleasing to a modern ear. — With an additional short syllable it is as follows :

Sāys mŷ ūncłē, Ī prāy yōu dīscōvēr  
Why you pine and you whine like a lover :

which, used alternately with the preceding, makes the measure of the witty ballad of Molly Mog, written by Gay, and often imitated.

3. The third form of the pure English anapestick consists of four anapests :

At the close of the day, when the hāmlēt is still.—

If I live to grow old, as I find I go down.—

This measure, which resembles the French heroick verse, is common in English songs and ballads, and other short compositions both comical and serious. It admits a short syllable at the end;

On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending :  
and sometimes also between the second and third foot,

In the mōrning when fōbēr, in the ēvening when mēllōw :

which is the longest form of the regular Anapestick in the English language.

To one or other of these seven Iambick, six Trochaick, and three Anapestick, species, every line of English poetry, if we except those few that are composed of dactyls, may be reduced. I have given only the simplest form of each. The several licences or variations, that these simple forms admit of, might be without difficulty enumerated : but I cannot at present enter into the necessities of English prosody.

Sidney endeavoured to bring in English hexameters, and has given specimens of them in the *Arcadia*. And Wallis, in his grammar, translates a Latin hexameter,

Quid faciam? moriar? et Amyntam perdet Amyntas?

into an English one,

What shall I do? shall I die? shall Amyntas murder Amyntas?

Mr. Walpole, in his catalogue of Royal and Noble authors, ascribes the following to Queen Elizabeth :

Persius a crab-staff, bawdy Martial, Ovid a fine wag.

But this sort of verse has never obtained any footing in our poetry: and I think I could prove, from the peculiarities of its rhythm, that it never can.

So much for the nature and use of EMPHASIS: which I divided into *Rhetorical* and *Syllabick*; subdividing the latter into the *long-vowelled* emphatick syllable, which is always long, and the *short-vowelled* emphatick syllable, which, when long, is made so by the complexness of the final consonants.

## CHAP. V.

### *Of Accent. Its nature and use.—Standard of Pronunciation.*

EMPHASIS is the work of the lungs; but ACCENT is performed by the contraction or dilatation of the glottis. For, while we speak with understanding, our voice is continually varying, not only its emphasis, but also its *tone*, from acute to grave, and from grave to acute. This is Accent. Inaccurate observers are not sensible of it in themselves, but think they speak without any tone; though at the same time they allow, that people who come from a distance have a tone in their speech, that is perceptible enough, and not very agreeable. And the stranger complains of their accent in the same terms, and with equal justice.

Thus I have heard a man of Edinburgh say, We have no tone; our voice in speaking is uniform, and not more grave, or more acute at one time, than at another; but go to Glasgow, and there you will hear a tone; or go to Aberdeen, and you will hear a tone

still.

still more remarkable, though of a different kind. Nay, a Londoner, a man of wit and genius, affirmed in my hearing, that the English spoken in the metropolis was for this particular reason the most elegant, because there, in polite company, the speech was unaccented, whereas, in every other part of the British empire, people spoke with a tone. And a clergyman of Virginia assured me very seriously, that the English of that province was the best in the world; and assigned the same reason in favour of the Virginian pronunciation. But every word these gentlemen spoke was to my ear a convincing proof, that they were mistaken. It is true, the North-American English accent is not so animated, as that of Middlesex, and the adjoining counties; but it is very perceptible notwithstanding. In fact, there is no such thing in language as monotony, or a continuation of the same note in speech, without ever rising above, or falling below it. Some children are taught to read in this manner; but their pronunciation is insipid and ridiculous. And though a man, who has a musical ear, and the command of his voice, might no doubt utter many words without any variation of accent, yet, if he were to speak so in company, he would be supposed to have lost his wits.

But, if every body speak with a tone, why, it may be said, does not every body perceive his own, as well as his neighbour's? It may be answered, that some, nay that many, persons do perceive their own accent; and that they, who do not, become insensible of it by habit. We sometimes meet with those who have acquired a custom of speaking very loud, or very low, and yet are not sensible, that they speak lower or louder than other people. Nay profane swearers have been heard to affirm with an oath, that they were not swearing. Our native accent, especially if we have never been from home, being continually in our ear, it is no wonder that we should not discern its peculiarities. But let a man, who

has been born and bred in Aberdeen, live two or three years in Edinburgh or London; and he shall become both insensible to the tone of the place of his residence, and also sensible of the accent that adheres to the dialect of his native town. In England, in Ireland, in the south and in the north of Scotland, the people speak dialects of one and the same language: and yet it is not difficult to know, by the tone of his voice in speaking, even before we hear him so plainly as to distinguish the words, whether the speaker be of England or of Ireland, a native of Lothian, or of Kincardineshire, of Aberdeen, or of Inverness. And if even the provincial dialects of the same tongue are distinguishable by their accents, we may with reason conclude, that the languages of different nations will be more remarkably distinguished in this way: which in fact is found to be the case.

Of all the nations upon earth, the antient Greeks seem to have been the most attentive to language. Their own they studied, both in the composition, and in the pronunciation, with extraordinary care. The tones of it could not escape the notice of that sagacious people. In order to make these of easier acquisition to strangers, they did what no other nation ever thought of doing, they used in writing certain characters, still retained in their books, and called the Greek accents, of which the meaning was, to regulate the tone of the voice in speech. We know they were invented for this purpose; though we cannot now make any use of them in our pronunciation of the Greek tongue.

It has been said, that the syllable marked with the *acute* accent was pronounced four or five notes higher than the non-accented syllables; that the *grave* accent signified a fall of the voice through the same interval nearly; and that the *circumflex* denoted a rise followed by a fall, which, as it took up double the time of a simple fall or rise, made the syllable so accented necessarily long.

long. But I am not satisfied with this account: for the passage quoted by a learned author, from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in proof of it, is very obscure. At any rate, these marks could have regulated the syllabick accents only: whereas, with us, accent is more distinguishable in the cadence of words and phrases \*, than in syllables. Be this, however, as it will (for I affirm nothing positively in a matter so little known) it is evident, that the Latin word *accentus* (from *ad* and *cantus*), and the correspondent term in Greek † *prosôdia*, (from *pros* and *ôdê*) must, in their primitive signification, have had a reference to song, or musical tone, and not (as some have thought) to those energies of the human voice, which are here expressed by the word Emphasis.

But let it be observed, that though in speech the voice is continually varying its tone, and is sometimes more acute, and at other times more grave, it does not, in modern languages at least, ascend or descend, by those musical intervals which are called notes, but rises and falls by degrees of variation incomparably more minute, and which our musical language has no terms nor symbols to

\* Mr. Sheridan, in those elegant Lectures which I heard him deliver at Edinburgh about twenty years ago, distinguished (if I rightly remember) the English interrogatory accent from the Irish and the Scotch, in this manner. His example was: “How have you been this great while?”—in pronouncing which, he observed, that towards the end of the sentence an Englishman lets his voice fall, an Irishman raises his, and a Scotchman makes his voice first fall and then rise. The remark is well founded; but it is difficult to express in unexceptionable terms a matter of so great nicety. I shall only add, that what is here said of the Scotch accent, though it may hold true of the more southerly provinces, is by no means applicable to the dialects that prevail in Aberdeenshire, and other parts of the north: where the voice of the common people, in concluding a clause or sentence, rises into a very shrill and sharp tone without any previous fall. “You bark in your speech,” says a man of Edinburgh to one of Aberdeen: “And you growl and grumble in yours,” replies the Aberdonian. In Inverness-shire, and the western parts of Moray, the accents become totally different, and resemble the tones and aspirations of the Eise.

† *προςὸδια*, from *προς* *ad*, and *ὠδὴ* *cantus*.

express.

express. A musician, founding the string of a violin by drawing his bow across, and at the same time making his finger *slide* up and down the string without *lifting* it, would produce a sort of sound somewhat similar, in its *mode* of rising and falling, to those varieties of accent which take place in language. An attempt has lately been made by Mr. Steele, to express certain accents of the English tongue by a new-invented sort of written characters. The work, I hear, is very ingenious; but, as I have not seen it, I can say nothing more about it.

From what has been said, we may learn, that, as every nation and province has a particular accent, and as no man can speak intelligibly without one, we ought not to take offence at the tones of a stranger, nor give him any ground to suspect, that we are displeas'd with, or even sensible of them. However disagreeable his accent may be to us, ours, it is likely, is equally so to him. The common rule of equity, therefore, will recommend mutual forbearance in this matter. To speak with the English, or with the Scotch, accent, is no more praiseworthy, or blameable, than to be born in England, or Scotland: a circumstance, which, though the ringleaders of sedition, or narrow-minded bigots, may applaud or censure, no person of sense, or common honesty, will ever consider as imputable to any man.

Are, then, all provincial accents equally good? By no means. Of accent, as well as of spelling, syntax, and idiom, there is a standard in every polite nation. And, in all these particulars, the example of approved authors, and the practice of those, who, by their rank, education, and way of life, have had the best opportunities to know men and manners, and domestick and foreign literature, ought undoubtedly to give the law. Now it is in the metropolis of a kingdom, and in the most famous schools of learning, where the greatest resort may be expected of persons adorned

with all useful and elegant accomplishments. The language, therefore, of the most learned and polite persons in London, and the neighbouring Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, ought to be accounted the standard of the English tongue, especially in accent and pronunciation: syntax, spelling, and idiom, having been ascertained by the practice of Good authors, and the consent of former ages.

And there are two reasons for this preference. One is, that we naturally approve as elegant what is customary among our superiours. And another, and a better, reason is, because the most enlightened minds must be supposed to be the best judges of propriety in speech, as well as in every other thing that does not affect the conscience.

The standard of speech being thus ascertained, provincial dialects are to be considered as more or less elegant, according as they more or less resemble it. And it has been the wish of many, that the same modes of language should prevail through the whole empire. But this, however desirable, is perhaps impossible. At least there never yet was any instance of it in an extensive country. The Greeks themselves, with all their philological accuracy, had different dialects:—the apostle Peter, when at Jerusalem, was known by his speech to be a man of Galilee:—Livy has been accused of provincial idioms, though his native city Padua was but two hundred miles from Rome:—in the southern part of this island there have long been two distinct languages, the English and Welch; and two others in the north, the Scotch and Erse, which are different from these, as well as from one another:—the dialects of Lancashire and Yorkshire are hardly understood in London:—even in Kent, and in Berkshire, we hear words and sounds, that are not known in Middlesex:—nay, the speech of the learned Londoner and Pa-



rifian differs not a little, both in idiom, and in accent, from that of his unlettered fellow-citizens.

As Emphasis gives energy to pronunciation, Accent renders it graceful; and is no doubt of further benefit, in distinguishing from one another the several tribes of mankind. For in many cases, it might be inconvenient to mistake a stranger for a fellow-subject; or not to have the means of proving a man's identity, or his birth-place, from the tone of his language. By their handwriting, and features, individuals may be distinguished; and the national arrangements of mankind, by their words and accent. And of all the peculiarities of a foreign tongue, accent is the most difficult for a grown person to acquire. No Frenchman, who has not passed his infancy or childhood in England, will ever speak English with the true accent. Scotch men have lived forty years in London without entirely losing their native tone. And it may be doubted, whether it is possible for one, who has lived the first twenty years of his life in North Britain, ever to acquire all the niceties of English pronunciation.—The same thing may be remarked of other languages, and the natives of other countries.

## C H A P. VI.

*Absurdity of the Epicurcan doctrine of the Origin of language: men must have spoken in all ages; the first man, by inspiration.—The variety of original tongues, a proof of the Scripture history of Babel.—All languages have some things in common, which it is the business of Universal Grammar to explain.*

WE learn to speak, when our organs are most flexible, and our powers of imitation most active; that is, when we are infants. Yet even then, this is no easy acquisition, but the effect of daily exercise continued for several years from morning to night. Were we never to attempt speech, till we are grown up, there is reason to think that we should find it exceedingly difficult, if not impracticable. This appears, not only from what is recorded of mute Savages found in deserts, who, though sagacious enough and of no great age, could never be taught to speak distinctly; one of whom, answering this description, was alive, and in England, a few years ago, and perhaps is alive still: but also from a fact more observable, namely, that in every language there are certain accents and articulate sounds, which they only can pronounce with ease, who have learned to do so when very young. Nay every province almost has some peculiarities of pronunciation, which the people of the neighbouring provinces find it very difficult to imitate, when grown up, but which, when they were children, they could have learned most perfectly in a few months. Infants, who have been taught to speak one language, acquire others with amazing facility. I knew an instance of a French child of six years old, who, on coming to Britain, forgot his mother tongue, and learned all  
the

the English he had occasion for, in little more than six weeks. A grown man, on the contrary, with all the helps of grammars, dictionaries, authors, masters, and conversation, seldom acquires a foreign tongue so as to speak it like a native.

If, then, there ever was a time, when all mankind were, as the Epicureans supposed, *mutum et turpe pecus*, a dumb and brutal race of animals, all mankind must, in the ordinary course of things, have continued dumb to this day. — For, first, to such animals speech could not be necessary; as they are supposed to have existed for ages without it: and it is not to be imagined, that dumb and beastly savages would ever think of contriving unnecessary arts, whereof they had no example in the world around them.

Lucretius tells us, that, at some early period, nobody knows when, the woods being set on fire, either by lightning, or by trees grated against each other in the agitation of a storm, human creatures, who, like the world and all things in it, had been formed of atoms falling together without order, direction, or cause, and who had hitherto lived dispersed and naked, as well as dumb, were so enervated by the heat of the conflagration, that they could never after hold out against the injuries of the weather:—that, constrained to take shelter in holes and caverns, males and females, jumbled together by accident, became known to each other, and in time resolved themselves into small associations or families:—that from henceforth men knew their own offspring; which formerly they did not; the intercourse of the sexes being then fortuitous and temporary, and without friendship on either side:—that the minds of those rugged savages, softened by the blandishments of domestick life, became in time somewhat more rational; and, after a little communication with the neighbouring families, found it necessary, for the general safety, to institute certain artificial distinctions of right and wrong, whereof, till this period, they had never been

conscious. These new notions, however, could not be enforced, nor obtain authority, without promises and compact; for the making of which, it was further requisite to invent certain signs of thought, that should have a more definite meaning, than the yells and gestures that had hitherto given expression to their feelings. And thus, both speech and moral sentiments were invented; which, according to this account, were as really the work of human art, as houses, waggons, ships, or any other piece of mechanism.

The beauty of Lucretius's poetry made this system fashionable at Rome. Horace adopted it, and has in a few well-known lines\* given a summary of it; and Virgil, in his youth, (for he afterwards became a Platonist) is supposed to have been tinctured with it.

\* Cum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,  
Mutum et turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter,  
Unguibus et pugnīs, dein fustibus, atque ita porro  
Pugnabant armis, quæ post fabricaverat usus;  
Donec verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent,  
Nominaque invenere; dehinc absistere bello, &c.

Lib. i. Sat. 3. v. 97.

The following paraphrase has nothing of the elegance of Horace or Lucretius; but seems to have all the elegance that so ridiculous a doctrine deserves:

When men out of the earth of old  
A dumb and beastly vermin crawl'd;  
For acorns, first, and holes of shelter,  
They, tooth and nail, and helter skelter,  
Fought fist to fist; then with a club  
Each learn'd his brother brute to drub;  
Till, more experienced grown, these cattle  
Forged fit accoutrements for battle.  
At last (Lucretius says, and Creech)  
They set their wits to work on *speech*:  
And, that their thoughts might all have marks  
To make them known, these learned clerks  
Left off the trade of cracking crowns,  
And manufactured verbs and nouns.

Nay

Nay Tully himself\*, though no admirer of Epicurean tenets, appears rather partial to this account of the origin of speech, laws, and policy; which, though repugnant to history, and fraught with absurdity, several authors of latter times have endeavoured to revive.

One would wonder, what charms men could find in a system so degrading to our nature; or what evidence in that which has no other foundation, than poetical fancy and wild hypothesis. The Pagans, indeed, who knew little of the origin of mankind, might be excused for favouring an opinion, which, as it appears in Lucretius, has at least harmonious numbers, and elegant description to recommend it. And yet, unseduced by poetical allurements, Quintilian declares, in the language of true philosophy, that moral sentiments are natural to us, and that men had speech from the beginning, and received that choice gift from their Creator. And Ovid's beautiful account of the first men seems to have been composed, partly from Hesiod's golden age, and partly from traditions founded upon the Mosaic history of the creation.—That we were at first good and happy, and lost our felicity when we lost our innocence,—is it not an idea more honourable to our nature, more friendly to virtue, and more consonant to the general notions of mankind, than that we were in the beginning a species of wild beast, and afterwards by improvement degenerated into wicked and wretched men. If there be, in the consciousness of honourable descent, any thing that elevates the soul, surely those writings cannot be on the side of virtue which represent our nature, and our origin, as such as we should have reason to be ashamed of. But he, who tells me, upon the authority of Scripture, and agreeably to the dictates of right reason, that we are all descended from beings, who were created in the

\* De Inventione, lib. 1. Tuscul. quest. lib. 5.

image of God, wise, innocent, and happy; that, by their and our unworthy conduct, human nature is miserably degraded; but that, on the performance of certain most reasonable conditions, we may retrieve our primitive dignity, and rise even to higher happiness, than that of our first parents;—the man, I say, who teaches this doctrine, sets before me the most animating motives to virtue, humility, and hope, to piety and benevolence, to gratitude and adoration.

Other absurdities in this account of the origin of society I may possibly touch upon hereafter. At present I would only observe, that *speech* could not have been invented in the way here described. For to animals in this state of brutality I already remarked, that language could not be needful: and it is hardly to be supposed, that dumb and beastly creatures would apply themselves to the cultivation of unnecessary arts, which they had never felt any inconvenience from the want of, and which had never been attempted by other animals. To which I may add, what is clear from some of the preceding observations, that Speech, if invented at all, must have been invented, either by children, who were incapable of invention, or by men, who were incapable of speech. And therefore reason, as well as history, intimates, that mankind in all ages must have been speaking animals; the young having constantly acquired this art by imitating those who were elder. And we may warrantably suppose, that our first parents must have received it by immediate inspiration.

As the first language, whatever it was, must therefore have been perfect; and liable to no depravation from a mixture of foreign idioms; and held in reverence by those who spoke it, that is, by all mankind, on account of its divine original; we may believe, that it would continue unaltered for many ages. Accordingly Scripture informs us, that when the building of Babel was begun,  
about

about eighteen hundred years after the fall, the whole earth was of one speech. And, had no miraculous interposition taken place, it is probable, that some traces of it would have remained in every language to this day. For, though, in so long a time, many words must have been changed, many introduced, and many forgotten, in every country, yet men, being all of the same family, and all deriving their speech from the only one primitive tongue, it may be presumed, that some of the original words would still have been in use throughout the whole earth: even as in all the modern languages of Europe some Greek, and some Hebrew, and a great deal of Latin, is still discernible. But Providence thought fit to prevent this; and, by confounding the language of the builders of Babel, to establish in the world a variety of primitive tongues.

This miracle could not fail to be attended with important consequences. Those men only would remain in the same society who understood one another: and so the human race would be broken into a number of small tribes or nations, each of which would keep together, and consequently at some distance from the rest. A general dispersion would follow: and in this way it is probable, that the whole world would be sooner inhabited, than if all the species had remained united in one great nation. And the distinctions of friend and stranger, of citizen and foreigner, would now take place: whence rivalship would arise; than which nothing more effectually promotes industry, and the various arts of life.

If it were not for what is recorded of Babel, the very great diversities of human speech would be a marvellous phenomenon. Languages are either Primitive, or Derived. That those which are formed out of the same parent tongue should all resemble it and one another, and yet should all be different, is not more wonderful, than that children and their parents should be marked with a

general family likeness, and each distinguished by peculiar features. Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, French, and a great deal of the English tongue, are derived from the Latin; with the addition of many new words, and new modes of termination and syntax, which were introduced by the northern nations. And therefore all these languages resemble the Latin and one another; and yet each is different from it, and from all the rest. But, if we could compare two original or primitive tongues together, the Hebrew, for instance, with the Gothick or with the Celtick, or the language of China with that of the Hurons in North America, we should not discern, perhaps, the least similitude: which, considering that all mankind are of the same family, could not be fully accounted for, without supposing, that some preternatural event, like that of the confusion at Babel, had some time or other taken place. But this history solves all difficulties. And we have no more reason to be surpris'd, that different nations, though related in blood, should speak languages totally unlike, than that cousins of the twentieth remove, living in different climates, some in houses and some in caves, some naked and others clothed, some burning in the torrid zone, and others freezing in the polar circle, should differ in their features and complexion.

But, as the miracle at Babel introduced no material change into human nature; and as, ever since the flood, men have had the same faculties, have been placed in the same or in like circumstances, have felt the same wants, found comfort in the same gratifications, and acted from the influence of the same motives; it is reasonable to infer, that the *thoughts* of men must in all ages have been nearly the same. In the most antient histories we find, that the modes of thinking and acting, of believing and disbelieving, of approbation and disapprobation, are perfectly similar to what we experience in ourselves, and in the world around us. Now, as human thoughts,  
discover



discover themselves by language, and as the thoughts of men in one age and nation are similar to those in another, is it not probable, that there may be in all human languages some general points of resemblance, in structure at least, if not in sound? Since, for example, all men in all ages must have had occasion to speak of acting, and of being acted upon, of good and of bad qualities, and of the various objects of outward sense, must there not in every language be verbs, and adjectives, and nouns? What one nation calls \* *hippos*, another may call *equus*, a third *cavallo*, a fourth *cheval*, and a fifth *borse*; that is, different compositions of articulate sound may stand for the same animal in different nations: but, in every nation, where this animal is known and spoken of, there must be some name for it; and words also to express its qualities, as *good*, *bad*, *strong*, *swift*, *weak*, *slow*, *black*, *white*, *great*, *small*, and its actions, as *running*, *walking*, *eating*, *drinking*, *neighing*, &c.

Languages, therefore, resemble men in this respect, that, though each has peculiarities, whereby it is distinguished from every other, yet all have certain qualities in common. The peculiarities of individual tongues are explained in their respective grammars and dictionaries. Those things, that all languages have in common, or that are necessary to every language, are treated of in a science, which some have called *Universal* or *Philosophical Grammar*; whereof I shall now endeavour to unfold the principles. The knowledge of it will not only illustrate what we may already have learned of the grammatical art; but also, by tracing that matter to its first elements, will give us more comprehensive views of it than can be obtained from any particular grammar; and at the same time make us better judges of the nature and extent of human language,

\* ἵππος.

and of the connection, that obtains between our words and thoughts. Considered as resulting from, and as founded in, the faculties and circumstances of human beings, the principles of grammar form an important, and very curious, part of the philosophy of the human mind.

Much new discovery is not to be looked for, in an investigation that has been several times attempted already with good success. Yet most of those who have gone before me in this inquiry (as far at least as I am acquainted with them) have both profited by the labours of their predecessors, and also made considerable improvements of their own. Whether I shall be thought to have done so in any degree, I know not. This, however, let me be permitted to say, that for many of the following, as well as of the preceding, remarks, I am not indebted to former authors; that in some particulars I have ventured to differ, and I hope not without reason, from those whom I esteem, and by whose writings I have been instructed; and that, though several of the topics are not without obscurity, the whole is delivered in a style, which, by repeated experience, I know to be intelligible, and not uninteresting, even to very young persons. Speculations of this nature are not so soon exhausted as some people may imagine. Every writer and teacher, who has taken pains to form a style, and to understand his subject, will be found to have a manner of his own: and as long as readers and hearers differ in their tastes and powers of comprehension, so long it may be useful, in explaining the sciences, to vary the modes of illustration and argument.

But before I proceed to Universal Grammar, it will be proper to make some remarks on language rendered visible by writing.

## C H A P. VII.

*Of the Art of Writing ; its importance, and origin.—Different sorts of it practised by different nations.—A short History of Printing.*

**A** WORD is an audible and articulate sign of thought : a Letter is a visible sign of an articulate sound. The use of letters is a wonderful invention ; but by no means universal. Every man can speak who is not deaf ; and men have spoken in all ages ; but in many nations the art of writing is still unknown.

Words spoken make an immediate impression, but depend, for their permanence, upon the memory of the speaker and hearer ; and the best memory loses more than it retains : but words written may be preserved from age to age, and made as durable as any thing human can be.—When we speak, we are understood no further than we are heard : but what is written may be sent round the world, and circulated in all nations.—We can speak no longer than we live : but the thoughts of men, who died three thousand years ago, are still extant in writing ; and, by means of this divine art, will continue to entertain and instruct mankind to the end of the world.—Moreover, while we only meditate, our memory is not always so faithful as to enable us to revise our thoughts, compare them together, and render them consistent : but by writing we make them pass and repass in review before us, till we have made them such as we wish them to be.—God has been pleased to reveal his will to us in writing ; and, without this art, policy ; which is the most venerable of all *human* institutions, would be exceedingly imperfect.

The

The importance of writing to the virtue and happiness of mankind, as well as to the ascertaining, methodizing, preserving, and extending, of human knowledge, is indeed so great, that one is apt to wonder, how any age or country should be ignorant of an art, which may be acquired with so little difficulty, and exercised with so much pleasure. But, though of easy acquisition to us, it is in itself neither easy nor obvious. Savages articulate their mother tongue, without troubling themselves about the analysis of sentences, or the separation of words; of resolving words into the simple elementary sounds they have no idea: how then should they think of expressing those simple sounds by visible and permanent symbols! In fact, alphabetical writing must be so remote from the conception of those who never heard of it, that without divine aid it would seem to be unsearchable and impossible. No wonder then, that some authors should have ascribed it to Adam, and supposed it to be the effect of inspiration.

Of the nature of Antediluvian, or of the first, writing, whether it was alphabetical, or by hieroglyphicks, we can only form conjectures. The wisdom and simple manners of the first men would incline me to think, that they must have had an alphabet: for hieroglyphick characters imply quaintness and witticism. That Moses knew an alphabet, is certain: and we may venture to say, he learned it in Egypt, where he was born and educated.

If this be granted, the hieroglyphicks of Egypt and Ethiopia will appear of later date than alphabetical writing; and to have been contrived, as many learned men have thought, by priests or politicians, for expressing, in a way not intelligible to the vulgar, the mysteries of religion and government.— A hieroglyphick, or *sacred sculpture*, is an emblematical figure, which denotes, not an articulate sound, as a letter does, but an idea, or thing. It is  
a representation

a representation of some part of the human body, or of some animal, vegetable, or work of art; but it means, not that which it represents, but something else that is, or is supposed to be, of a like nature. Thus, the figure of a lamp, among the Egyptian priests, signified, not a lamp, but life; a circle was the emblem of eternity; and an eye on the top of a sceptre denoted a sovereign.

Hieroglyphicks must have been a very imperfect mode of expressing thought. They took up a great deal of room; could hardly be connected so as to form a sentence; were made slowly, and with difficulty; and, when made, were no better than riddles.

Cæsar, in his account of the Druids of Gaul, relates, that they obliged their disciples to get by heart so great a number of verses, that the term of their education was sometimes lengthened out to twenty years. And we are told, that they accounted it unlawful to commit those verses to writing, notwithstanding that they understood the Greek alphabet, and made use of it in their ordinary business both publick and private. “Two things,” continues he, “seem to me to have determined them in this: first, that their tenets might not be published to the vulgar: and, secondly, that, having no books to trust to, they might be the more careful to improve their memory, and more accurate students of the mysteries of their order.” \*—May not the Egyptian hieroglyphicks have been invented for the same purposes? By the vulgar they could not be understood: and their enigmatical nature made it necessary for the priests to study them, and consequently the doctrines implied in them, with extraordinary perseverance and application.

When the Spaniards invaded Mexico in the fifteenth century, the news of their landing was sent to the emperor Motezuma, not

\* Cæsar. Bell. Gall. lib. vi. cap. 13.

by writing, or by hieroglyphicks (for the Mexicans had neither) but by a rude draught or picture of the ships. This is no doubt a natural way of expressing things visible: but I cannot agree in opinion with those authors, who suppose it to have been the most antient form of *writing*; as it is so laborious, so liable to be misunderstood, expressive of so few ideas, and in general so very inconvenient. The Mexican, who carried the news, was certainly able to give a verbal account of what had happened. If he carried also a draught of the ships, it must have been, as we carry plans, with a view to give a more lively idea than words could convey. European ships had never appeared in that part of the world before; and if those people had any skill in drawing, it was as natural for them to practise it on so memorable an occasion, as it would be for us, if a huge unknown sea-monster were to be thrown upon the land.

In Peru and Chili, when we first became acquainted with those countries, there was found a curious art, that in some measure supplied the place of writing. It was called *Quipos*; and consisted in certain arrangements of threads, or knots, of different colours; whereby they preserved, in a way which we cannot explain, inventories of their moveables, and the remembrance of extraordinary events. The knowlege of the *Quipos* is said to have been a great mystery, handed down by tradition from fathers to their children, but never divulged by the parent, till he thought his life near an end.—Belts of *wampum* (as it is called) are probably contrivances of a like nature, made of a great number of little beads of different colours artfully, and not inelegantly, interwoven. These belts are used by the Indians of North America in their treaties; and are said to express, I know not how, the particulars of the transaction.

In China, if we believe what is reported by travellers, the art of writing has been understood these three or four thousand years; and yet they have no alphabet to this day\*. There is for each word a distinct character; and the number of words is said to be fourscore thousand: so that a Chinese Doctor grows old and dies, before he has learned one half of his letters. The characters are of the nature of hieroglyphicks, but much curtailed or contracted for the sake of expedition; so that their primitive shape cannot be guessed from their present form. They divide them into four classes: the ancient, which are preserved on account of their antiquity, but never used; a second species appropriated to publick inscriptions; a third, common enough in printing and even in writing, but too unwieldy for daily use; and a fourth, more manageable, for ordinary business.—It is further said of the Chinese tongue, that every word in it is a monosyllable; and that one and the same syllable may have ten or a dozen different meanings, according to the tone with which it is pronounced. If this be true, there must be more accent in it, than in any other language that has yet been heard of; and we need not wonder, that it is of so difficult acquisition to strangers.

Some of our modern philosophers affect to be great admirers of the genius, policy, and morality of the Chinese. The truth is, that Europeans know very little of that remote people; and we are apt to admire what we do not understand: and for those who,

\* This is the common opinion, and was once mine. But I have been lately informed, by a Scotch gentleman, who resided long at Batavia, that a Chinese, on hearing his christian name and surname, wrote something upon paper, and that another Chinese, on seeing it, articulated the two words distinctly. This could hardly have been done, except by those who understood the art of expressing by written symbols the *elementary sounds* of language. And yet it is possible, that the syllables which compose the name might be Chinese words. The gentleman, however, is of opinion, that the trading people of China have a sort of alphabet.

like the Chinese, obstinately shut their eyes against the light of the Gospel, the French authors, now-a-days, and their imitators, are apt to cherish an extraordinary warmth of brotherly affection.—But if we consider, that, though their empire is supposed to have stood for upwards of four thousand years, the Chinese are still unskilled in almost every branch of literature; that their most learned men have never thought it worth while to invent or adopt an alphabet, though they must have heard that there is such a thing in other parts of the world; that their painting, though gaudy, is without perspective, and looks like a mass of things, men, trees, houses, and mountains, heaped on one another's heads; that, when a fire broke out at Canton, whereof Commodore Anson was an eye-witness; they did not know how to extinguish it, but held out the images of their gods to it: if we also consider their proneness to deceit and theft; their low cunning; their absurd jealousy and timidity, which refuses almost all communication with the rest of the world; their excessive admiration of their own wisdom, and their contempt of other nations, although they must be sensible, that one European ship of war could have nothing to fear from the whole force of their empire:—if, I say, we reflect on these things, we shall be inclined to think, that they are an ignorant and narrow-minded people, dextrous indeed in some petty manufactures, but incapable of enterprise, and invention, and averse to inquiry. The long continuance and strictness of their policy, which some admire as the effect of profound wisdom, is to me a proof of their want of spirit: those nations being most liberal in their conduct to strangers, and withal most liable to political commotion, who are most eminently distinguished for magnanimity and genius.

When we think, how difficult, and how inadequate, the methods hitherto mentioned are, of rendering language visible and permanent,



ment, we must be struck with wonder at the usefulness and perfection of the alphabet. By this invention, if it may be so called, although every sound in language has a correspondent symbol, yet the characters are so few, and of a form so simple, that one may learn the use of them in a very short time. Nay, with the help of a few additional symbols, one alphabet might serve for many languages. The Latin, and all the modern tongues derived from it, have the same system of letters: and if we were accustomed to see Greek and Hebrew in the Roman character, we should read them as well in that as in their own.—When things are fairly reduced to their first principles, it is pleasing to observe, how the understanding is enlightened, and how easy that becomes in practice, which before seemed impossible from its multiplicity. Chinese Doctors have no doubt been told, that by the European methods a perfect knowledge of written language might be acquired in half a year; but I suppose it would be no easy matter to make them believe it.

The alphabets of different tongues differ considerably in the number, order, and shape of the letters; and, as was before observed, it is presumable, that in all the alphabets now extant there are both defects and redundancies. But this, though an inconvenience, is not very material; as the difficulties of pronunciation that result from it are easily overcome.

The implements of writing have been different at different periods. In very early times, writing was performed by engraving upon stone. Such at its first appearance was the Decalogue. And in the deserts that lie between Egypt and Palestine, the rocks of certain mountains are said to be covered with ancient characters, supposed by some to have been carved by the people of Israel, while they sojourned in that wilderness. Afterwards, letters delineated with a coloured liquid upon vegetable substances, as wood, the bark of trees, the Egyptian papyrus, (whence our word *paper*) were found more con-

venient on all ordinary occasions. The English term *book* is supposed to be derived from a Saxon word signifying a beech-tree; whence it would appear, that wooden manuscripts were in use among our ancestors; and every body knows, that, in Latin, the bark of a tree, and a book, are called by the same name. Animal substances, especially the skins of sheep, goats, and calves, which in time came to be manufactured into parchment and vellum, were better suited to the purposes of writing, on account of their smoothness, pliability, and durability: they are still used in conveyances; and the first authentick copy of every British statute is engrossed on parchment.

The Romans, while they were composing, wrote with the sharp end of a bodkin or stylus upon tables covered with wax, and, when they wanted to correct any thing, erased the former impression with the other end, which was flat: whence Horace advises the author, who would compose what should be worthy of a second reading, to make frequent use of the other end of his pen\*, that is, to correct much and carefully. When it was finished to their mind, they had it transcribed upon paper or parchment, or something of the same nature, called by Horace *charta* and *membrana*; which they rolled up, and kept in a box commonly made of cedar wood, or anointed with oyl of cedar, as a security against worms and rottenness. This roll of written parchment they termed *volumen*; a word which we have adopted; although our way of making up our books is very different, and much more convenient.

Pens, ink, and paper, according to the present use, were first known in Europe about six hundred years ago: but some writers will not allow them to be so antient. The learned Dr. Prideaux is of opinion, that the art of making paper of linen or flax is an eastern

\* Sæpe stylum veritas, iterum quæ digna legi sint Scripturus. Sat. i. 10. 72.

invention,

invention, and was introduced into Spain by the Saracens. But observe, that the *charta* mentioned by Pliny and other classick authors, though, like our paper, used both for writing and for binding up goods in parcels\*, and also composed of vegetable ingredients, was however a different preparation: being made of the filmy fibres of the inner bark of the papyrus, laid on a table first parallel and then transverse, and glued together by the muddy water of the Nile, or, where that was wanting, by a paste made of fine flour and common water.

Printing, as well as paper-making, is of high antiquity in China. But the Chinese printing is very different from ours, and much more imperfect. They carve the characters of every page upon wood; so that their printing resembles our engraving. The first European printers proceeded in the same manner; but, as they had no intercourse with China, their art was of their own invention. Printing by types, or moveable letters, is a great improvement; for, in this way, with a small provision of types, we may print many books different from one another: whereas, to make a book by the former method, there must for every page be an engraved block of wood; and the engravings could be of no further use, if the same books were never reprinted. This must have made our first efforts in printing very expensive and slow; but, slow and expensive as they were, the discovery was important, and made books incomparably more numerous, and consequently cheaper, than ever they could have been while manuscripts only were in use. For though the carving of the wooden plates would take up more time than the transcribing of several copies, yet when the plates were finished, thousands of copies might be printed off in a few days.

Little is known of the first printers: nor has either the era or the birth-place of this wonderful invention been exactly ascertained.

\* See Horace. Lib. ii. Epist. i. 270, 113. Lib. i. Sat. x. 4.

The general opinion is, that printing with moveable types was first practised at Mentz about the year one thousand four hundred and fifty; and that an edition of the Bible of that date was the first printed book, Augustin *de civitate Dei* the second, and Tully's *offices* the third.

One of the first printers was Fost, or Fauft, or Faustus, who is thought by some to have been the inventor of moveable types. He did not choose to let the world into the secret of his art, for fear of lessening the price of his books. And therefore, when he exposed a parcel of them to sale at Paris, he gave out that they were manuscripts; which he might the more easily do, because no body could suppose they were any thing else. And, that they might pass for such, without suspicion, he had in printing left blank spaces for certain capital letters, which he afterwards inserted with the pen, flourished and illuminated, according to the fashion of the times. But, when it was observed, how exactly one copy corresponded with another, and that there was not the smallest variation in the shape, size, or place, even of a single letter, he was thought to have done what no human power could execute, and consequently to have intercourse with evil spirits; and found himself obliged, in order to avoid prosecution and punishment, to divulge the mystery of printing. Hence came the vulgar tale of Doctor Faustus; who is said in the story-book to have been a great magician, and to have sold himself to the devil.

Of the usefulness of Printing, as the means of multiplying books without end, of promoting the improvement of arts and sciences, and of diffusing knowledge through all the classes of mankind, I need not enlarge, as the thing is too obvious to require illustration. I shall only mention one particular, which is abundantly striking. Common bibles are in this country sold in sheets to the retailer at fourteen shillings a dozen, or fourteen pence apiece; as I was informed

informed by a person who dealt in that article to a very great extent. Thus is the price of the best book in the world reduced so low, that every person, however poor, may have one, either bought with his own money, or given him in charity. But, before the invention of printing, it would have been a great matter if every parish could have afforded to have a bible; as the expence of writing out so great a book would have been at least equal to that of building an ordinary country church.

To us, who are acquainted with both arts, it may seem strange, that the Greeks and Romans, who excelled in the engraving of seals and medals, should never think of plates or types for printing. But arts may appear obvious after they are known, which are very far from the imagination of those who never heard of them. The affairs of this world are ordered by Providence, who makes human wisdom subservient to its own good purposes. That the magnet attracts iron, was known to the antients; but its power of giving a polary direction to that metal was not found out till the thirteenth century.

Few arts have so soon become perfect, as this of Printing. In the library of Marischal College there is a Latin translation of Appian's Roman history, printed at Venice in the year fourteen hundred and seventy-seven, that is, in the twenty-seventh year of the art, which, in the nice cut of the letters and neatness of the press-work, is hardly inferiour to any book of the present age. Its only fault, which it has in common with all the printed books of an early date, is the great number of contractions. These were much affected by the first printers, in imitation, no doubt, of the manuscript-writers, to whom they were a considerable saving both of time and of paper. They are now disused in most languages, except the Greek; and it is to be wished perhaps, that they were not used at all. In writing for one's own use one may employ

abbreviations, or the cyphers of short hand, or any other characters that one is acquainted with; though even this is not prudent, except when one is obliged to write with uncommon expedition: but what is to be laid before the publick, or any other superiour, should have all possible clearness, and ought therefore to be free from contractions, and the like peculiarities.

Before the middle of the sixteenth century, that is, in less than a hundred years after the invention of printing, this art was brought to its highest perfection, by the illustrious Robert and Henry Stephen; who have a claim to our admiration and gratitude, not only as the greatest of printers, but also as the most careful editors, and most learned men, of modern times. The former published a *Thesaurus*, or Dictionary, of the Latin, and the latter a *Thesaurus* of the Greek tongue: works of astonishing accuracy and erudition, and without doubt the greatest works of their kind in the world. Henry's *Greek poets*, in folio, is to this day studied, and imitated, as a model of typographical excellence. And that edition by Robert, of the Greek Newtestament, of which a copy is just now before me, printed in the year one thousand five hundred and forty six, and which is commonly called *O mirificam*, (possibly from the superlative elegance of the printing, but probably from the two first words of the Preface) is not yet surpassed in respect of beauty, nor perhaps equalled. Their style of printing has been successfully imitated by my lamented friends Robert and Andrew Foulis of Glasgow, who did much for the improvement of their country, and established a taste for elegant printing in Scotland; and whose folio Homer is one of the finest and most correct books that ever came from the press.

# The Theory of Language.

## PART II.

### Of Universal Grammar.

#### INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE words of different languages differ greatly in sound. Nay, in this respect, two languages may be so unlike, that the most perfect knowledge of the one would not enable us to understand a single word of the other. If, therefore, all languages have some things in common, those things must be sought for, not in the *sound* of the words, but in their *signification* and *use*.

Now words are of various characters in regard to signification: and if a person, ignorant of grammar, were to look into the vocabulary of any language, he would be so confounded with their multitude, as to think it impossible to reduce them into classes. And yet the species (or sorts) of words in the most comprehensive tongue are not many: in our own, which is sufficiently copious, they amount to no more than TEN: and, in the following short sentence, every one of the ten may be found once, and some of them twice. “ I now see the good man coming, but alas! he walks  
“ with difficulty.” — *I* and *he* are pronouns, *now* is an adverb, *see* and *walks* are verbs, *the* is an article, *good* is an adjective, *man* and *difficulty* are nouns, *coming* is a participle, *but* a conjunction,

T t

with

*with* a preposition, and *alas* an interjection. One would think a language must be very imperfect, that has not a word to answer each of those contained in this sentence.

May we not then infer, that in every language there must be nine or ten species of words; or, to express it otherwise, that Articles, Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Participles, Adverbs, Prepositions, Interjections, and Conjunctions, must be in all languages?—This, however, will not appear with full evidence, till we have taken a more particular view of these several sorts of words; and shown each of them to be necessary, or how far each of them may be necessary, for expressing certain modes of human thought, to which, from the circumstances of mankind in every age and nation, we have reason to think that all men would find it expedient to give utterance. Thus shall we unfold the principles of Universal Grammar, by tracing out those powers, forms, or contrivances, which, being essential to language, must be found in every system of human speech that deserves the name.



C H A P. I.  
O F N O U N S.

S E C T. I.

*Of Nouns Primary, or Substantives. — Of Number, and Gender : which (taking these words in the Grammatical sense) depend, partly upon the nature of things, and partly upon custom and arbitrary rule.*

**T**HAT nouns, or the names of things, must make part of every language, will not be disputed. Men could not speak of one another, or of any thing else, without Substantives. Man, house, stone, mountain, earth, water, meat, drink, &c. must surely be spoken of in every nation.

A Substantive, or Noun, is a word denoting a substance ; or, more properly, is “ a word denoting the thing spoken of.” Now the things we speak of either have a real existence, as man, tree, house, hatchet ; or have had a real existence, as Babylon, Eden, Cesar ; or are spoken of as if they had existed, or did exist, as Jupiter, Fairy, Lilliput ; or are conceived by the mind as having at least the capacity of being characterised by qualities, as virtue, beauty, motion, swiftness.—These last are called Abstract Nouns ; and the understanding forms them, by abstracting, or separating, from any natural or artificial substance, either real, or imaginary, certain qualities, and making those qualities the subject of meditation or discourse : as — the eagle *flies* — its *flight* is swift : — the house *shakes* ; its *shaking* is terrible : — Voltaire was *witty* ; his *wit*

was indecent:—Minerva and Venus were *beautiful*; but the *beauty* of the former was majestic, and the *beauty* of the latter alluring.

That the formation of abstract nouns is natural to man, in every condition wherein he can be placed, will appear, if we consider, that it is for their *qualities* that things are valued and attended to; and that, therefore, we must often compare qualities with one another, and consequently speak of them as being desirable, valuable, pleasant, great, small, good, evil, indifferent, &c. In this manner a quality is spoken of as some *thing*, that is itself characterised by qualities; which comes so near the description of a substance, that language gives it a name of the substantive form.—Perhaps, however, it might be doubted, whether abstract substantives be essential to language. Thousands of them indeed there are in all the tongues we are acquainted with: but in many cases their place might be supplied by other words; though I confess, that this would often give rise to awkward circumlocutions.

The qualities, ascribed to abstract nouns or ideas, may themselves be abstracted, and become the things spoken of, and so be characterised by other qualities. Thus from *beautiful animal*; *moving animal*, *cruel animal*, let the qualities be separated, and assume the substantive form, and they become *beauty*, *motion*, *cruelty*; which, as if they were real things, may be characterised by qualities, *great beauty*, *swift motion*, *barbarous cruelty*. These qualities also may be abstracted, and transformed into *greatness*, *swiftness*, *barbarity*; which may have new qualities assigned them equally susceptible of abstraction, *transitory greatness*, *inconceivable swiftness*, *brutal barbarity*.

In speaking of substances, or things, natural, artificial, imaginary, or abstract, all men will have occasion to mention; sometimes one of a kind, and sometimes more than one: *a man* is coming,

coming, or *men* are coming : I see a *ship*, or I see *ships* : he thought he saw a *ghost*, or he dreamed he was furrounded with *ghosts* : Augustus had many *virtues*, Nero had not *one virtue*. In every language, therefore, nouns must admit of some variety in their form, to denote *unity* and *plurality*. If the word *man*, for example, had no plural, it could not be known, when one said, I see the man coming, whether one or more than one was meant. The inconvenience arising from this ambiguity would soon show the necessity of removing it, either by altering the termination, or the middle or initial letters of the word, or by some other contrivance.

But this is not equally necessary in all cases. The word which denotes one individual substance and no other, and which Grammarians call a *proper name*, can never denote more than that one, and therefore cannot have plurality. *Epaminondas* can never be plural, so long as we know of no more than one of that name. In like manner, *Westminster abbey* denotes one particular building, *Rome* one particular city, *Etna* one particular mountain, and the *Thames* one particular river.

When these, and the like words, assume a plural, they then cease to be *proper names*, and signify a class or species of things, or perhaps supply the place of general appellatives. When I say, *the twelve Cæsars*, I use the noun, not as the proper name of an individual, but as a common appellative belonging to twelve persons, to each of whom it is equally applicable. When I say, that *twenty Thameses* united would not form a river so large as the Ganges, I use the word *Thames* to denote in general a river, or a quantity of running water, as large as the Thames. We speak of the Gordons, the Macdonalds, the Howards, &c. ; in all which cases, it is plain, that the noun, which bears the plural termination, is not the distinguishing name of one man, but a general name common to every individual of a tribe or family.

Further: When any individual person has rendered himself famous in a particular way, his name is sometimes given to such as are famous in the same way; and then, it becomes, in like manner, a common appellative, and admits of plurality. Meccenas was a great patron of learning, and Virgil an excellent poet whom he patronised: and Martial has said, that “Virgils will not be wanting where there are Mecenases.” Who does not see, that the meaning is, “Good authors will not be wanting, where there are great patrons?”

We are told, in our Grammars, that proper names for the most part want the plural. But the truth is, that proper names *always* want it: for when a name, that is commonly applied to one individual, assumes a plural form, it ceases to be a proper name. And as every such name *may* assume such a form, the Latin Grammarians, as well as the Greek, might have given examples of proper names with plural terminations. For *Cæsares, Cæsarum, Cæsariibus*, are as agreeable to Latin analogy, as \* *Aineiai, Aineion, Aineiais* are to Greek.—It will occur to you perhaps, that some proper names are always plural, and have no singular, as *Athenæ, Mycenæ, Thebæ, the Devifes, &c.* But this is merely accidental; and results not from the nature of the thing, but from the custom of a particular language; and is therefore a consideration that belongs not to Universal Grammar.

Every name in language, that denotes a *genus* or a *species*, may be applied either to one, or to many individuals of a *kind* or *sort* †, and

\* *Aineiai, Aineion, Aineiais.*

† When a number of things are found to resemble each other in some important particulars, we refer them to one class, species, or tribe, to which we give a name; and this name belongs equally to each individual comprehended in that class or species. Thus, the word *man, homo*, denotes a class of animals, and is equally applicable to every human being. — Again, finding several species or classes to resemble each other

and must by consequence be capable of expressing plurality, as well as unity. *Homo*, therefore, and *man*, must admit of some such variety, as *homines* and *men*; because the word may be used of one person, or of any number of persons, of the human species. And this distinction of Singular and Plural would seem to be essential to the nouns of every language: at least we may venture to affirm, that it could not be wanting without great inconvenience. There are, indeed, in many tongues, and perhaps in all, some nouns that have no plural form, and others that have no singular, even when there is nothing in their signification to hinder it: but this, like the plural proper names, is accidental, and might have been otherwise, if custom and popular use had so determined.

In the Attick dialect, and poetical language, of the Greeks, there is also a *dual* number to express *two*. But this is not necessary; though several other antient tongues have it, particularly

in certain common qualities, we refer them to a higher class called a *genus*, to which we give a name, that is equally applicable to every species and every individual comprehended under it. Thus all living things on earth resemble each other in this respect, that they have life. We refer them, therefore, to the genus called *Animal*; and this word belongs to every species of animals, and to each individual animal. — Moreover, all things, animated and inanimate, agree in this, that they are created; and in this view we refer them to a class still higher, called *Creature*; a word which belongs equally to every genus and species of created things, and to each individual thing that is created. — Further still, All beings whatever resemble one another in this respect, that they *are* or *exist*; whence we refer them to a class still higher, and indeed the highest of all, called *Being*. — This gradation is seen at one glance in the following words; *Socrates, Man, Animal, Creature, Being*.

That class is called a *Species*, which comprehends under it, or is understood to comprehend, individuals; and that a *Genus*, which comprehends a number of species.

Antiently the English noun *Kind* was the same with *Genus*, and *Sort* with *Species*: but *kind* and *sort* have long been confounded by our best writers; and we are obliged to borrow the words *genus* and *species* from the Latin: — though, indeed, in good Latin authors, *Species* never has that meaning which we here give it; and which in the language of Cicero would be expressed thus, *pars quæ subiecta est generi*, the class that is subordinate to the genus,

the Hebrew, the Gothick, and the Celtick. For, languages being formed in some measure by accident, it is no wonder that there should be redundancies in them, as well as defects. — It has been said, that *ambo* in Latin, and *both* in English, are duals. But it is hardly worth while to introduce a new term into any grammar, for the sake of one example. Besides, there is this difference between the words in question and Greek dual nouns, that the latter are joined in syntax to verbs, adjectives and participles of the dual number; whereas *ambo* takes a plural verb, adjective and participle, and *both* takes a plural verb.

Another thing essential to nouns is *gender*. For language would be very imperfect, if it had no expression for the *sex* of animals. Now all things whatever are Male, or Female, or Both, or Neither.

The existence of hermaphrodites being uncommon, and even doubtful, and language being framed to answer the ordinary occasions of life, no provision is made, in any of the tongues we are acquainted with, for expressing, otherwise than by a name made on purpose, or by a periphrasis, Duplicity of sex. The genders therefore are only two, the *masculine* and the *feminine*: for what we call the *neuter* gender implies properly a negation of sex, or that the thing which is said to be of this gender is *neither* male nor female.

In Hebrew, there is no neuter; every noun being either masculine or feminine: and when things without sex are expressed by pronouns, or alluded to by adjectives, they are more frequently feminine than masculine. \*

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\* More particularly: The demonstrative pronoun used for *this thing* (answering to τὸ τοῦτο *hoc*) when no substantive is expressed, is feminine. Thus, in the Septuagint, and in Mat. xxi. 42. Παρὰ κυρίῳ ἐγένετο αὐτὴ καὶ ἐστὶ θαυμαστὴ: literally, A Domino facta est haec, .et est *miranda*. — Also when an adjective is used indefinitely without a noun, the gender

All animals have sex; and therefore the names of all animals must have gender. But the sex of all is not equally obvious, nor equally worthy of attention. In those species that are most common, or whose outward appearance and circumstances are particularly attended to, the male is sometimes called by one name which is masculine, and the female by a different name which is feminine. Thus in English we say man, woman; husband, wife; king, queen; lord, lady; father, mother; son, daughter; nephew, niece; uncle, aunt; boy, girl; horse, mare; cock, hen; boar, sow, &c. In others of similar distinction, the name of the male is altered only in the termination when applied to the female: as emperor, empress, antiently emperess; patron, patroness; shepherd, shepherdess; widower, widow; master, mistress, antiently masterss, and still pronounced so by the vulgar in some parts of Scotland. Sometimes we apply the same name to either sex, only prefixing or subjoining a particle to denote the gender; as he-afs, she-afs; cock-sparrow, hen-sparrow; peacock, peahen; moor-cock, moor-hen.

When the sex of any animal is not obvious, or not material to be known, the same name, in some languages, is applied without variation to all the species, and that name is said to be of the *common gender*, and assumes in concord either a masculine or a feminine adjective, participle, or pronoun, according as the one sex or the other is intended to be specified; as, in Latin *Bos albus* a

gender in Hebrew is commonly feminine. Thus in Psal. xii. 4. "A tongue speaking *great things*;" and Psal. xxvii. 4. "*One thing* I desired;" the adjectives answering to *great* and *one*, are feminine: *Lingua loquens magnas: Unam petivi.*

Something like this idiom is observable in the vulgar dialects of North Britain; at least when things of eminence are spoken of. A Kincardineshire man says, of the river, that *she* is deep; of the watermill, that the frost will not permit *her* to go, &c. But things of less consideration, as a knife, a chair, &c. are neuter; and the sun is invariably masculine, and the moon feminine.

white ox, *Bos alba* a white cow : but if no account is made of the sex, and only the species of animal signified, the gender of the name is frequently determined by its final letters \*.

Beings superiour to man, though we conceive them to be of no sex, are spoken of as masculine in most of the modern tongues of Europe, on account of their dignity ; the male being, according to our ideas, the nobler sex. But idolatrous nations acknowlege both male and female deities ; and some of them have given even to the Supreme Being a name of the feminine gender.

When we personify the virtues, we speak of them as if they were females ; perhaps on account of their loveliness ; or rather in compliance with the analogy of the Greek and Latin tongues. Thus we call Justice the queen of the virtues, not the king : and we say, that if Virtue were to take a visible form, all the world would be enamoured (not of his, but) of her charms.

The antients made females of the Furies ; those dreadful beings, who were supposed to haunt the guilty in this world, and torment them in hell. This might be owing to the accidental termination of their name, or to some poetical fable concerning their origin : or perhaps it was thought, that, as nothing is so amiable as a beautiful and virtuous woman, so nothing is more hideous than extreme ugliness and rage united in the female form.

Some authors have supposed, that it is natural for the human mind to consider as masculine the names of such things as are eminent in power ; and to make those feminine which denote what

\* In Greek, when women are mentioned merely as persons, and without any regard to sex, they are sometimes in syntax connected with pronouns, articles, and participles, of the masculine gender. Of this the learned Dr. Clarke gives a variety of examples in his notes on Hom. Iliad. lib. v. vers. 778. Traces of the same idiom are to be seen in Latin authors. Thus in Plautus we read, *Quis ea est? Quis ea est mulier?* And thus, in Virgil, Eneas, speaking of his mother Venus, says, *Descendo, ac ducente Deo.* *Aeneid.* ii. 632.



is peculiarly fitted for receiving, containing, or bringing forth. But though many plausible things may be said for this theory, it is also liable to many objections.

What in this world is more powerful than Death, which no animal can resist; or than the Sun, which is, as it were, the parent of life, both to animal, and to vegetable nature? Yet, though *Tbanatos* is masculine in Greek, and though Mr. Harris seems to think, that the notion of a female Death would be ridiculous, *mors* in Latin, *mort* in French, *morte* in Italian, and *muerte* in Spanish, are all feminine\*: and, though the moon is feminine, and the sun masculine, in many languages, yet, in the Saxon and some other northern tongues, the sun is feminine, and the moon masculine.

If it is merely because the *earth* is the common mother of all terrestrial productions, that her name is feminine, it will be difficult to assign a sufficient reason, why the *sea* should not also be feminine; since it is probable, that as many animals and vegetables may be produced in the sea, as on the land. Its deep voice and boisterous nature entitle it (according to Mr. Harris) to a masculine name: but in Virgil, the fury *Alecto*, who was a female, and sufficiently turbulent, utters a more terrific yell than ever proceeded from the most tempestuous ocean †. Catullus and Ovid mention the sea as a female, by the name *Amphitrite* ‡. And the common people of Scotland, when expressing the sea by a pro-

\* One of our most correct poets scruples not to make Death a female in the following passage:

Lo, in the vale of years beneath,  
A grievly troop are seen,  
The painful family of *Death*,  
More hideous than their *queen*. Gray's Ode on Eton College.

† Virg. *Æneid*. vii. 514.

‡ Catull. de nupt. Pel. et Thet. vers. 11. Ovid. *Metamorph.* i. 14.

noun, often call it *She*, but I think never *He*: “Let us go and  
“look at the sea; they say *she* is very rough to-day.”

It seems to us quite natural, that a ship should be feminine; because, as the learned author of *Hermes* observes, it is so eminently a receiver and container of various things, of men, arms, provisions, and goods. Accordingly *naus* in Greek and *navis* in Latin are feminine; and English sailors, speaking of their vessel, say, *She* is under fail: nay, those very persons who call a war-ship a *man of war*, do still adhere to the same idiom, and say, The man of war sent out *her* boats. And yet, the French word for *ship*, *navire*, though derived from the Latin, is masculine.

It were vain to attempt to reduce these peculiarities to general principles. Real animals, when spoken of with a view to their sex, will no doubt in every country have names of that gender which befits their nature. But allegories are fantastick things; and genders, that have no better foundation, cannot be expected to be uniform in different countries. And those imaginary beings, who are idolized by ignorant nations, may to a capricious fancy appear in such a variety of lights, that it shall be impossible for a stranger, from what he may know of their supposed attributes, to determine any thing *a priori* concerning the gender, which custom may in any particular country annex to their names. We have heard both of a god and of a goddess of war: and who will say, that Bellona is not as proper a name as Mars, for that imaginary demon? The god of strength, one would think, must be male; and this may be given as one reason for the gender of Hercules. And yet Necessity, who must be stronger than Hercules, and all the heathen gods put together, is represented by Horace as a female personage\*; for no other reason, that I can guess, but because her name in Latin happens to have a feminine termination. It is

\* Hor. Od. i. 35. vers. 17.

natural, one may say, that the power who is supposed to preside over love should be beautiful and feminine: and yet the Romans ascribed this passion as much to the influence of a wicked little Boy, whom Virgil calls *Amor* and *Cupido*, as to that of his mother Venus. The charioteer of the fun was Phebus, according to the classicks: but a Saxon poet would undoubtedly have preferred a female to that high office.

As things which have not animal life cannot with propriety be said to have sex, (for the sexual arrangement of vegetables is a modern discovery, hinted at indeed by Aristotle\*, but unknown to the authors of language) it would seem most natural, that the names of all inanimate things and abstract ideas should be of the *neuter* gender; that is, should imply, that the things they stand for are of *neither* sex. And in some languages this is no doubt the case. But in Greek and Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, many nouns denoting abstract ideas, and things without life, are masculine, and many are feminine. The only good reason to be given for this is, that certain words are considered as of certain genders, on account of their final letters; because accident and custom have so determined. But, if it be asked, why in Latin (for example) the termination *a* of the first declension should be feminine, and of the third neuter; or why in either it should be feminine or neuter, and not masculine; I know of no reason, but what has been already assigned, namely, that in the Latin tongue such is the rule, as established by custom:—by Custom, I say, which in all human affairs has great authority, but which in giving laws to language is absolute and irresistible.†—It may be said, indeed, that, while a people and their language are in a rude state, and before men think of making grammars, it may be natural to say

\* De Generat. Animal. lib. i. cap. 1.

† See Horat. Ar. Poet. vers. 71, 72.

*bonæ pennæ* (for instance), and *bonam pennam*, on account of the similar sound. There may be something in this. But it goes not far in accounting for the fact I speak of. For, to be according to rule, the termination of the adjective and participle must *often differ* from that of the corresponding noun: *splendidum diadema, plurimus ignis, pii vates, res tranquillæ*, being as much according to rule, as *ingenium bonum, viro bono, antennarum velatarum*.

In English, *most* names of things without sex *are*, and all of them *may be*, neuter. We may say, speaking of the sun, either that *he* was, or that *it* was, eclipsed; and, of a ship, that *it* was wrecked, or that *she* was. But, in all the other languages I know, the gender of most substantives is fixed. And, even in English, when speaking of things inanimate, or of things without sex, we cannot make that masculine, which custom has made feminine, nor that feminine which custom has made masculine, though we may make either one or the other neuter. Of the sun I may say, *he* is set, or *it* is set, but I cannot say, *she* is set; and of the moon, that *she* is changed, or that *it* is changed, but not that *he* is changed. In like manner, speaking of the human soul, I may say, that *it* does not think always, or that *she* does not think always, but I cannot say, that *he* does not think always.

In strict propriety of speech, all English nouns, denoting what is without life, ought to be neuter: and when we make them masculine or feminine, it must be understood to be by the figure called Personification. And it is no doubt an advantage in our tongue, and (as a very learned author \* remarks) serves to distinguish our logical or philosophical style from the poetical or rhetorical, that we may always speak of what is without life, either as a *thing*, in the neuter, or, as a *person*, in the masculine or feminine, as best suits our purpose. For this cannot be done so easily in other lan-

\* Harris's Hermes.

guages; at least it cannot be done, so as to mark the figure, or the want of it, by a variation of the gender. In Latin, Greek, and French, for example, *virtue* is always feminine: but, in English, we may, as we please, make it either feminine or neuter; and say, with equal propriety, *Virtue* shall receive *her* reward, (where we speak of *Virtue* poetically, or rhetorically, as a person), or, *Virtue* shall receive *its* reward, where we speak of it with more philosophical exactness.

In old English authors, I find *his* sometimes used, where we now use *its*. Thus, in *Leviticus*, we read of “the brazen altar, and “*his* grate of brass, *his* staves, and all *his* vessels.” Hence I was once led to think, that this sort of substantives, though neuter in modern English, were sometimes in our antient language masculine. But it was a mistake. For in the first chapter of *Genesis* we have the following words; and similar phrases there are in other parts of Scripture: “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding “seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit, after *his* kind whose seed “is in *itself*.”\* Now, if the noun *fruit-tree* had been considered as masculine by our Translators, the sentence would have run thus:—“the fruit-tree yielding fruit after *his* kind, whose seed is “in *himself*.” But as they apply to one and the same substantive, first the pronoun *his*, and then the pronoun *itself*, I infer, not that the substantive was then both masculine and neuter, but, that the pronoun *his* was used as a possessive, in speaking of neuter substantives, though it is now invariably applied to such as are masculine. †

From

\* So in the third part of the Church’s homily *against peril of Idolatrie*, “What can “an image, which when *it* is fallen cannot rise again, which can neither help *his* friends, “nor hurt *his* enemies, express of the most mighty God!”

† Dr. Campbell has fully explained this matter, by observing, with his usual accuracy, that the word *its* is not to be found in our Bible: whence we may infer, that,

From these remarks it will appear, how far the genders of nouns are fixed by the nature of things, and how far they depend on custom. — And so much for *Substantives*, or *Nouns*; a sort of words, that must of necessity be in all languages whatsoever.

that, in the old language, it was not used, at least in solemn style. See *The Philosophy of Rhetorick*, vol. ii. page 394. Instead of that word, we have always, in the common Translation, either *his* (as in the passages quoted) or a periphrasis, as *the path thereof*, for *its path*. *Itself*, indeed, occurs: but, in the old editions, is printed *it self*, in two words, and, therefore, is to be considered as compounded, not of *its* and *self*, but of *it* and *self*. And this is the real origin of that reciprocal pronoun. *Self* in old English means *same*. So Shakspeare,

Shoot another arrow that *self* way  
Which you did shoot the first. *Merchant of Venice.*

And so Dryden; who, like Homer, Ennius, Virgil, and other great poets, often affects the antique,

At that *self* moment enters Palamon. *Knight's Tale.*

*Himself*, therefore, *itself*, *myself*, *thyself*, &c. did probably denote, according to etymology, *the same him*, *the same it*, *the same me*, *the same thee*, &c.

## S E C T. II.

*The nature and use of Nouns Secondary, or Pronouns.*

**T**HE words now to be considered do not form a numerous class; nor are they, perhaps, so essential to human speech as the former: but they are so convenient, that we have no reason to think there is any language without them. They are called by the Greeks \* *Antónumiai*, and by the Latins *Pronomina*. And the name well expresses their nature; they being put † *anti tou onomatos*, *pro nomine*, instead of the noun or name. Their use, and the occasion of introducing them into language, may be thus illustrated.

Suppose me to meet with a person, whose name I know not, and to whom I am equally unknown; and that we find it necessary to talk together. I want to give some information concerning myself, and to address that information to him. But how is this to be done? He knows not my name, and I know not his. I might point to myself, when I meant to speak of myself, and to him when I would speak of him; but this would be inconvenient in the dark, and awkward in any circumstances. Shall I begin with informing him of my name, and myself of his; and afterwards repeat my own name when I speak of myself, and his when I speak of him? Perhaps he might not choose to tell me his name, and I might be equally shy in regard to mine. But suppose this difficulty got over, and that I want to ask him the road. If I confine myself to proper and substantive names, I say, “ James begs as a favour of  
“ Alexander, that Alexander would inform James, which is the

\* Αντωνομιαί.

† αντί τε ονοματος.

“ road to such a place :” and, all the while, I must be pointing to myself and to him alternately, to signify, that I was speaking of him and of myself, and not of any other persons of the same names. If in so short and simple an address there is so much difficulty, it may well be imagined, that in a continued dialogue there would be a great deal more. \*

Now for removing these difficulties there is a method very easy, and, I think, obvious enough to any rational being. Instead of the two proper names, substitute two pronouns, *I* and *You*; and there is no need either of knowing one another’s names, or of pointing. “ *I* beg as a favour of *You*, that *you* would tell *me*, which is the “ road.” Here, then, we see in part the origin, the nature, and the use, of Pronouns. They are the substitutes of proper names. This is the first and simplest idea of them; but it is not a complete one.

Further: Suppose two persons to be talking of a third person, whose name they either know not, or do not care to be continually repeating: it is evident, that the easiest way of managing such a conversation would be to adopt a pronoun, such as *he* and *him*. “ I did not see Alexander to-day, but Alexander sent word, that “ Alexander would do Alexander the favour to call at my house in “ the evening :” — is not this more complex, and less intelligible, than if I were to say, “ I did not see Alexander to-day, but “ *he* sent word, that *he* would do *himself* the favour to call at “ my house ?”

These three Pronouns, *I*, *Thou*, and *He*, are called in our grammars the pronouns of the *first*, *second*, and *third person*. For it is

\* Many questions might indeed be put, without either the knowledge of names, or the use of pronouns. In the case supposed, I might be well enough understood by asking simply, Which is the road? But speakers in ordinary conversation continually refer to, and address, one another; and if they had no words to mark such reference, the whole would be ambiguity and confusion.



said, that the speaker, who denotes himself by the pronoun *I*, is the chief person with regard to his own discourse. It should rather be said, that he is the person, whom we first attend to; for we naturally turn our eyes, and incline our ears, to the person who speaks. He who is spoken to, and whom the speaker addresses, by the pronoun *thou* or *you*, is the next who draws our attention. And the person or thing spoken of, expressed by *he* or *it*, is, in contradistinction to the other two, called the *third* person.

That the use of pronouns may be considered as posteriour in time to that of nouns, and a kind of refinement upon it, appears from a fact, which every body must have observed, that when a child begins to speak, and knows his own name, he is apt to use it in speaking of himself; and it requires some pains, or some practice at least, to teach him how to supply its place by the pronouns of the first person *I*, and *Me*.

If it be asked, whether pronouns, like the nouns they represent, must admit the distinction of unity and plurality, the answer is obviously, yes. For one or more persons may speak, or one may speak the sentiment of many; and to one or to more persons our speech may be addressed; and the persons or things spoken of may be either one or many. And therefore *I* must have a plural *we*; *thou* must have *ye* or *you*; and *he* or *it* must have *they*. And the same analogy must take place in all languages.

The Greeks and Romans, in addressing one person, used the singular of the pronoun, *thou*; whereas we, and many other modern nations, use the plural *you*. But in very solemn style, as when we invoke the Supreme Being, we use *Thou*: and, what is remarkable, we sometimes use the same form of the pronoun in contemptuous or very familiar language. This last mode of speech the French, who have it as well as we, express by the verb *tutoyer*; and Shakespeare makes *thou* a verb of the same import: "If thou

“ *thouest* him three or four times it will not be amiss:” that is, if thou addressest him by the contemptuous or familiar appellation of *Thou*.—The people called Quakers profess, in imitation of the scripture style, to use *thou* on all occasions, when speaking to one person; but many of them ungrammatically put the oblique case *thee* in its place.

In the Latin tongue, it is a rule, when the pronouns of the first and second person are joined by the copulative, to give precedence to the former, and say, *Ego et Tu*; but we use a contrary arrangement, *You and I*; for it would look like arrogance if one were to say in English, *I and You*. One English author, indeed, has, in a certain controversial treatise, said, not only, “ I and “ Doctor such-a-one,” (naming his opponent) but also, “ I and “ the Publick:” but it is a singularity, in which I believe he will not be imitated. Cardinal Wolfey was blamed for writing in one of his letters, *Ego et Rex meus*, I and my king; for this, though agreeable to the idiom of the language in which he wrote, is so repugnant to our manners, that it was thought nothing but the most extravagant vanity could have induced him to adopt it.

It is difficult to prescribe laws to ceremony. A Spaniard, out of respect, walks before you out of his house; to intimate, that he has such confidence in you, that he could leave it in your possession: we, out of respect, make our friend walk out of our house before us; to intimate, that we account him the better man. The customs are contrary, though they proceed from the same principle.

A King, exerting his authority on a solemn occasion, adopts the plural of the first person, “ *We* strictly command and charge:” meaning, that he acts by the advice of counsellors, or rather, that he is the representative of a whole people. The same form of speech was frequent in the mouth of an old Roman, though a private man: and, in allusion to the Classick idiom, English authors do

sometimes, in speaking of themselves, say *We* and *Us*, instead of *I* and *Me*; but of late (except when several writers are supposed to be concerned in the same work) it has been thought more elegant, because it is become more fashionable, at least in serious composition, to use those pronouns in the singular.—It appears, then, that though the three pronouns in question are necessary in all languages, the modes of applying them are not in all nations uniform.

Those of the first and second persons have no distinction of gender in any language I know\*; nor is it necessary they should. For persons conversing together must know one another's sex from the voice, dress, and other circumstances; and therefore it is not more requisite that their words should imply it, than that my friend, every time he speaks to me, should tell me his name. *I* and *You*, therefore, *ego* and *tu*, belong to both sexes indifferently, and are masculine or feminine, according to the sex of the persons whose names they stand for. Thus a man would say, *Ego sum ille quem quæris*, I am he whom you seek; but a woman would say, *Ego sum illa quam quæris*, I am she whom you seek. The pronoun *ego*, *I*, is the same in both sentences: the other words; that admit of such variation, assume the gender of the speaker.

The pronoun of the third person must have the distinction of gender. It represents that which is the subject of the conversation; the gender whereof, if it be absent, cannot be known to the hearer; unless notified by the words that are spoken. If the subject of conversation be a man, the pronoun that stands for it must be masculine; if a woman, it must be feminine; if a thing, it may be neuter, unless the custom of the language determine otherwise.

\* In Hebrew, the pronoun of the second person has the distinction of gender. But this cannot be necessary in language, because it is particular.

So that in language it would seem necessary, or at least convenient, that there should be three pronouns of the third person, answering to *he, she, it*; *ille, illa, illud*; *ekeinos, ekeiné, ekeino*.

The necessity, or the utility, of this, will be still more apparent, (as Mr. Harris ingeniously observes) if we suppose it wanting. Suppose then, that in English there is no other pronoun of the third person but *he* and *him*; and that, in an account of Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit, we read thus, “*He* prevailed on *him* “ to eat *him* ;” it is plain, that from these words we should not know what was eaten, who did eat, or who advised to eat. But let the genders of the pronoun be distinguished, “*She* prevailed on “ *him* to eat *it* ;” and all ambiguity vanishes.

Further: the thing or person spoken of, which is notified by the pronoun of the third person, may bear various relations to the speakers, as well as to other things: it may be near; or distant, present or absent, belonging to the speaker, or to the hearer, or to some other person, &c. Hence it will be convenient to have a variety of pronouns expressive of the third person under these various relations; as *this, that, mine, thine, his, hers, theirs, ours*, &c. — But observe, that these words are not of the nature of pronouns, except when they supply the place of a noun; which is not always the case. They are pronouns, when we say, “ Give me “ *that*” (pointing to it) — “ I will keep *this*.” When they do not supply the place of a noun; but are joined to a noun, in order to ascertain or define it, they belong to a class of words, to be considered hereafter, and may be called pronominal *articles*; as in these examples: *this man* I esteem; *that man* I admire; *your stature* is tall; *my health* is bad, &c.

The person who speaks, and the person who is spoken to, may either of them be the subject of conversation; as “ *I* am *he* who “ sent you a letter yesterday, *You* are the *man* I was looking for ;”—

so that the pronouns of the first and second person may coincide with the third: but with one another they cannot; for, to say, I am thou, or, thou art I, would not be sense in any language, because it implies a confusion of persons, and that a man is not himself, but some other man.

The pronouns of the first and second person differ also in another respect from those of the third. *I* and *Thou*, *We* and *Ye*, *Us* and *You*, *Me* and *Thee*, point out the persons whose names they stand for, and are therefore understood even when nothing previous has been said. But *He*, *She*, *It*, &c. are terms of universal application; and cannot be understood, unless they are referred to something that went before, or is to come after, in the discourse. If I say, "I am hungry," or, "Thou art good," the person signified by the pronoun is known to be no other than myself the speaker, or him or her to whom I address myself; and this is equally known, whether I have said any thing previous or not. But if I begin a subject by saying, "*He* is wise, *She* is fair, I want *them*," I am not understood, till I say expressly, what the persons or the things are, to which I allude.

The divisions of pronouns into Primitive and Derivative, and into Demonstrative, Reciprocal, Interrogative, Possessive, &c. may be found in any common grammar; and therefore I shall say nothing of them in this place. But there is one division of Pronouns, which must not be overlooked, because it leads to some remarks of a more general nature.

All the pronouns hitherto mentioned may introduce a sentence, and are therefore called *Prepositive*. But there is also a *Subjunctive* pronoun; the nature of which I shall illustrate by an example similar to that which Mr. Harris has given.

If I say, "The magnet is a stone: The magnet attracts iron," I utter two sentences, that are distinct and perfectly independent;  
for

for either may be understood without the other. If instead of the noun *magnet* in the second sentence I put the pronoun *it*, and say, "The magnet is a stone: it attracts iron;" the two sentences are still distinct in syntax, but in meaning not independent; for, to find the sense of *it* in the last, you must look to what went before, which informs you, that *magnet* is the noun whose place is supplied by that pronoun. Now it is easy to join these two sentences into one, by means of the copulative conjunction, "The magnet is a stone, and it attracts iron." Remove the words *and it*, and in their stead insert the pronoun *which* or *that*: "The magnet is a stone, *which* attracts iron;" and you form one sentence of the same meaning, and somewhat more concise than the other. This word *which* is the subjunctive pronoun I speak of. You see it expresses the united powers of the copulative conjunction *and*, and of the prepositive pronoun *it*: and herein consists its character. When it relates to a rational being, it commonly assumes, in modern English, the form *who* or *that*; and *which*, or *that*, when it alludes to things irrational or inanimate. In old English, *which* is often used where in modern English we should say *who*; as in the first clause of the Lord's prayer.\* It is sometimes omitted in colloquial style, as in this example, "The person you speak of is not the person I mean." The correspondent pronoun in Greek is † *hos* and *hostis*; in Latin, *qui*, *quæ*, *quod*.

\* Some clergymen, to show their extreme delicacy, read "Our Father, *who* art in heaven." But if nothing will please them, but what is modern, why do they not also change *pardoneth* and *absolveth* into *pardons* and *absolves*, *ghost* into *spirit*, *world without end* into *through all eternity*, and all the other old words and terminations into new ones? These old modes of language, in writings consecrated to religious use, should never be altered, till they become unintelligible, or ludicrous, or likely to occasion a mistake of the sense.—Virgil, Sallust, and Quintilian knew, and all good writers and critics are sensible, that old words judiciously applied give an air of grandeur to certain kinds of composition, and that familiar expressions have often an effect directly contrary.

† ἢ — ὅστις.

But

But I will not affirm, that this subjunctive pronoun is either so necessary, or so frequent, in all languages, as in those which are most familiar to us. Being framed for the purpose of subjoining one sentence to another, and consequently of making one complex sentence of two or more simple sentences, it is evident, that if we could be satisfied with expressing ourselves in short sentences, this pronoun might in many cases be wanted. And it is observable, that illiterate persons and children rarely use it; joining their short periods, where they choose to join them, by the connective *and*; which is indeed a simpler and more obvious expedient. In some very antient languages, too, as the Hebrew, which have been employed chiefly for expressing plain sentiments in the plainest manner, without aiming at any elaborate length or harmony of periods, this pronoun occurs not so often, as in Greek and Latin, and those other tongues, which have been embellished by the joint labours of the philosopher and rhetorician. Read the first chapter of Genesis: and you will find that the subjunctive pronoun occurs but seldom; the sentences being short, particularly towards the beginning, and joined for the most part by the connective. And the same simplicity of composition is frequent in Scripture, especially in the historical parts; which in that Divine book is a great beauty, and an evidence both of its truth, and of its antiquity. For had the diction been more elaborate, it would have had too much the air of human contrivance, and of the arts of latter times. But in other compositions, the same unadorned simplicity would not always be agreeable. For we are not displeased to find human decorations in a work of human art. Besides, the sentiments of inspiration support themselves by their intrinsic dignity; whereas those of men must often be supported and recommended by the graces of language. The inspired author commands our attention, and has a right to it; but other writers must flatter and

amuse, in order to prevail with us to attend.— But this by the by. I only meant to say, that complex sentences, which without the subjunctive pronoun could not easily be framed, may be so contrived and disposed, as to contribute not a little to the beauty of human compositions: though in writings of a higher order we neither expect nor desire them; because we know, that, however pleasing, they are but human contrivances at the best. The same ornaments are unseemly in a temple, which we admire in a private apartment; and that rhetorical art, which in Virgil and Cicero is so charming, would be quite unsuitable to the majesty of Scripture.

The subjunctive pronoun may join two sentences so closely, that to a superficial observer they shall seem to be but one. What can be more clearly one sentence, than the following, “The man whom you see is Peter?” Is it possible, one might say, to analyse it into two? Nothing more easy. Here are two distinct affirmations; and here, therefore, may be two sentences. “You see a man. That man is Peter.” Both these are comprehended in the abovementioned proposition; and these two taken together express its full meaning. It is, therefore, not a simple, but a compound sentence. In fact, wherever there is a subjunctive pronoun, there must be the import of both a pronoun, and a copulative conjunction: and all conjunctions connect sentences, as will be seen hereafter.



C H A P. II.  
O F A T T R I B U T I V E S.

S E C T. I.

*Of Attributives — Adjectives, Participles, Verbs. — Their distinguishing characters. — Comparison of Adjectives.*

**T**HE words hitherto considered have been called by some writers Primary and Secondary Substantives. Both classes denote substances or things; the former, directly; the latter, by supplying the place of the former.

But by nouns and pronouns alone not one human sentiment could be expressed. There must, therefore, in all languages, be other classes of words. Men not only speak of persons and things, but also of the qualities, characters, and operations, of persons and things. What would it signify to speak of Cesar, if one were never to say whether Cesar was good or bad, or what were his qualities, or what his actions?

If we were to hear such an expression as, — *was brave* — *was admired* — *invaded Britain*, we should naturally ask, *who* was so? or, *who* did so? for till we be informed of this, we cannot know what is meant. Not that the words *brave*, *admired*, *invaded*, have no meaning; but because they denote certain qualities or attributes, which lead our thoughts to the person or thing to whom they are supposed to belong. For qualities imply something in which they inhere, or to which they pertain: and if there were no persons or things in the universe, there could be no qualities or attributes.

Now the words that denote attributes or qualities are in general called *Attributives*.

The antient Greek Grammarians called them \* *rhémata, verba, verbs*: — whatever may be said, or, more accurately, whatever may be affirmed, or denied, concerning any thing or person. Thus of Cefar, it may be affirmed, that he was *brave*, that he was *admired*, that he *invaded Britain*; and of the same Cefar, it may be denied, that he was *cruel*, that he was *despised*, that he *conquered Britain*. In these affirmations and negations, *Cefar* is a substantive, name, or noun; *he* is a pronoun; and *brave, cruel, admired, despised, invaded, conquered*, are attributives.

In all the languages we know, and probably in all others, there are three sorts of attributives, which are called in the grammars, Adjectives, Participles, and Verbs. — The Adjective denotes a simple quality, as *brave, cruel, good, swift, round, square*. — The Participle denotes a quality, together with a certain modification of time; as *amans*, loving, which relates to time present; *amatus*, loved, which alludes to time past; and *amaturus*, about to love, which points at time future †. — The Verb is still more complex than the participle. It not only expresses an attribute, and refers that attribute to time, past, present, or to come; but also comprehends an assertion; so that it may form, when joined to a noun, a complete sentence, or proposition. Thus when I say, *Alexander ambulat*, Alexander walks, I utter, though in two words, a complete sentence: and this sentence comprehends in it these four things: first, a substantive proper name, *Alexander*; secondly, an attribute, quality, or operation of Alexander, *walking*; thirdly,

\* ῥήματα.

† This idea of the Participle may suffice at present; having been generally adopted by Grammarians. But it is not accurate; nay it is very inaccurate. See the fifth section of this chapter.

this quality or operation fixed down to the present time, *walks*, or *is walking*; and fourthly, this quality as affirmed to belong to the person spoken of, Alexander *is walking*.

From the verb take away the assertion, and there remains the attribute and the time, which are commonly thought to form the essence of the participle; and from the participle take away the time, and there remains the simple quality, as expressed by the adjective. Thus from *amat*, the verb, *loveth*, or *is loving*, take away the assertion *is*, and there remains *loving*, which is called a participle of the present time: and if we consider the attributive *loving*, not as bearing reference to the present or to any particular time, but as expressing a person's general character which remains with him at all times, we transform it into an adjective; as when we say, a *loving* parent, a *sympathising* friend, Aristides fuit *amantissimus* æqui. *Doctus*, *Spectatus*, *Probatus*, and many other attributives of the same nature, are participles, when they imply any notion of time; but adjectives, when they denote a quality simply, without regard to time.

All substances, natural, imaginary, artificial, and abstract, and all persons; and, in a word, whatever is expressed by a substantive, may be characterised by qualities, and, consequently, joined in syntax to adjectives, to participles, and to verbs. We may say, a *tall man*, a *riying man*, a *man speaks* or *runs*: a *mournful muse*, an *inspiring muse*, the *muse inspires* or *sings*: a *swift ship*, a *tossed ship*, the *ship overtakes* the enemy: of *virtue* we may say, that *it is lovely*, that *it is praised*, that *it brings* happiness: and, of Socrates, that *he was wise*, that *he was condemned*, and that *he drank* poison. Pronouns, too, as they stand for nouns, may be characterised in the same manner; as in the two last examples.

From the method of arrangement commonly followed in grammars, we might be apt to conclude, that adjectives are of the same

class with nouns, and that the participle is a part of the verb. But when we examine these classes of words philosophically, that is, according to their meaning and use, and without regard to their derivations, or final letters, we shall be satisfied, that the arrangement here given is right, and that the other, though not materially wrong, is however erroneous. In their nature, no two sorts of words can be more unlike, than the substantive and the adjective; and therefore it must be a fault in distribution, to refer both to the Noun. The Substantive is the name of the thing spoken of, and in Greek and Latin is called *name*, for it is *onoma* in the one, and *nomen* in the other: and it would have been better, if in English we had called it *the name*, rather than *the noun*; for this last word, being used only in grammar, we are more apt to misunderstand, than the other, which is in familiar use. But the adjective is not the name either of a thing or of a person; nor is it a name at all: it denotes a quality; and the antient Greeks very properly called it, not *onoma*, but *epitheton* or epithet, and sometimes *rhêma*; which last word means whatever is affirmed or denied of a thing or person. It is true, the term *rhêma* does not distinguish it from the verb and participle; but then it does not confound it with the noun or substantive. And in fact, the adjective or epithet partakes more of the verb and participle, than of the noun. So that, if there be any reason for distinguishing the noun from the verb, there is equal reason for distinguishing the noun from the adjective: and the term *adjective-noun*, however common, is really as incongruous, as *verb-noun* or *participle-noun* would be.

The reason, why Grammarians have confounded the adjective with the noun, seems to be, because in Greek and Latin both are declined by cases, resemble each other in termination, and, when joined in syntax, agree in case, gender, and number. But this is no good reason. If it were, participles also should be called nouns:

which in no grammar, so far as I know, has ever been done.—Adjectives are sometimes called *adnouns*; which would seem not altogether improper, because they are joined to nouns; but is not accurate, because it does not distinguish the adjective from the participle and verb, which are also joined to nouns. \*

The Participle, *Participium*, (in Greek † *metochê*) was probably so called, because it *partakes* of the nature both of the verb and of the adjective; of the former, by expressing time, and of the latter, by denoting a quality. But, though derived from the verb, it is not to be considered as a part of it; because, though it may resemble a verb in expressing a quality with time, it implies no affirmation, and consequently wants the verb's distinguishing character. If its derivation were to give it any right to be considered as a part of the verb, then the adverb *presumptuously* might as well claim to be a *part* of the adjective *presumptuous*, of the noun *presumption*, and of the verb *presume*. Accordingly, the Latin grammarians, while they confound adjectives with nouns, do yet very properly distinguish the participle from every other part of speech.

Wherever adjectives and participles admit the distinctions of gender, number, and case, it would seem natural, that, in these three respects, they should agree with the nouns to which they belong. Indeed, I cannot see, why adjectives and participles should have those distinctions, unless it be, that they may the more effectually coincide with their respective nouns. For *bonus*, *movens*, *good*, *moving*, or any other adjective or participle, considered in itself, cannot be of any number or of any gender: for it may be asserted

\* If adjectives may ever with propriety be called *Adnouns*, it seems to be, when they are necessary to give the full signification of a noun. Thus the *golden eagle* is no more than the *name* of one species of the aquiline tribe. Accordingly, what in one tongue is thus expressed by two words may in another be signified by one. Thus *νεοσκιετος* is the name of the same bird in Greek. Similar instances are innumerable; as the *Mediterranean sea*, a *setting dog*, &c. See *The Philosophy of Rhetorick*. Book iii. chap. 2.

† Μετοχην, from μετιχην participare.

of one, or of many; and of that which is either masculine or feminine, and of that which is neuter. Twelve men or women, for example, may be *good*, or *in motion*, as well as one; and many sorts of animals and inanimate things, as well as one sort.—Agreeably to these remarks, we find, that in Latin, Greek, and some other languages, wherein the termination of adjectives and participles varies according to the gender and number;—that in those languages, I say, adjectives and participles follow the gender, number, and case of the substantives to which they are joined: but English adjectives and participles, which never vary the termination, and are all of the nature of indeclinable Latin adjectives (as *frugi*, *nequam*, *centum*) adapt themselves, without any change, to nouns of all genders, cases, and numbers.—Whence we may infer, that the declension of adjectives and participles, though it takes place in many tongues, and may contribute to elegance and harmony of style, is not essential to language, and is therefore a consideration which belongs not to Universal Grammar. And it will appear afterwards, that the same thing is true of the declension of nouns.

The *comparison* of adjectives is another source of variety, which demands attention; that we may see how far it is, or is not, essential to language.—Things or persons, that have a certain quality in common, may differ in respect of the *degrees* in which they have it. This paper is white, and snow is white; but snow is *whiter* than this paper. Pliny was eloquent, Cesar was more eloquent, and Cicero was the most eloquent of the three. Sophocles was wise, Socrates was wiser; but Solomon was the wisest of men. These, and the like degrees, of the same quality, must be observable in all ages and nations, must be spoken of by all men, and must therefore in one way or other be expressed in all languages.

In Latin and English, there are four ways of expressing this variety. The first is, by joining to the adjective an adverb of comparative

parative increase; as *more* hard, *very* hard, *most* hard; *magis durus*, *valde durus*, *maxime durus*.—The second is, by varying the termination of the adjective: *wise*, *wiser*, *wisest*; *sapiens*, *sapientior*, *sapientissimus*; \* *sophos*, *sophóteros*, *sophótatos*.—The third is, by assuming other adjectives, which do themselves denote both a quality and comparison; as *good*, *better*; *bad*, *worse*; *bonus*, *melior*, *optimus*.—The fourth is, by blending the two methods last mentioned: as in English, *good*, *better*, *best*; where *best* (contracted from the Saxon *Betteſt* or *Betſt*) is plainly allied to *better*, but *better* (though formed from the Saxon *Bet*) is, in English, a primitive word, not derived from *good*, nor from any other adjective now in the language. So in Latin, *malus*, *pejor*, *peſſimus*; and so in Greek † *kakos*, *cheirón*, *cheiriſtos*.—In other tongues, other methods equally convenient, perhaps, and equally elegant, may have been adopted, for marking those increasing degrees of qualities, which are commonly called *degrees of comparison*.

If it were asked, whether participles have this variety, I should answer, No. As attributives, they might have it, no doubt; for most attributes or qualities admit the distinctions of *more* and *less*: but participles, as expressive of time, cannot have this variety; because time, whether considered as past, or present, or as future, admits not those distinctions. Of two things that are good one may be *more* and the other *less* so; but if two persons are *writing* at this present time, the writing of the one cannot be more connected with time present, than that of the other; and if Milton was writing in the last century, and Virgil twenty centuries ago, the time in which Milton wrote is *as really past*, as that in which Virgil wrote. And therefore, when an attributive, bearing the form of a participle, is varied by a comparative or superlative termination, or has its

\* Σοφος, σοφωτερος, σοφωτατος.

† κακος, χειρων, χειριςτες.

meaning heightened by an adverb of comparative increase, as *amans*, *amantior*, *amantissimus*; *doctus*, *doctior*, *doctissimus*; a loving friend, a more loving friend, a most loving friend,—that attributive is to be considered, not as a participle expressing a quality with time, but as an adjective expressing a simple quality.

As many verbs either denote, or imply action; and as the same action may be performed with greater or with less energy; it seems reasonable, that they, as well as adjectives, should admit of increase or of decrease in their signification; which is probably the case in all languages. But in every language that we know, it is done by means of adverbs, and not by varying the termination of the verb: for this would have added unnecessarily to the complexness of that attributive, which in most languages is complex enough already. Thus we say in English, Brutus loved money *much*, Cato loved it *more*, Crassus loved it *exceedingly*. So in Latin, *amat*, *magis amat*, *vehementer amat*.

Such adverbs as express the meaning of attributives, may admit of comparison, if the attribute itself be capable of *more* and *less*. Thus *diu*, for a long time, is varied into *diutius* and *diutissime*; *stulte*, in a foolish manner, or foolishly, into *stultius* and *stultissime*; *prope*, in a near situation, into *propius*, and *proxime*, &c. So in English we say, adverbially, long; longer, very long; foolishly, more foolishly, most foolishly; near, nearer, nearest or next.

Those words admit not of comparison, which denote what is so definite as to be unsusceptible of *more* and *less*. Quality, says Aristotle, admits of more and less; but substance does not. If this be allowed, it follows, that substantives do not admit of comparison, but that attributives do. Goliath was *taller* and *stronger* than David; but David was as much a male of the human species as Goliath. If we say of any one, that he is *more a man* than another, we give to the noun the sense of an attributive; for the meaning  
must



must be, that he is *more manly*, or that he possesses some other good qualities in a higher degree. So when Pope says, of a certain person, that he is “a tradesman, meek, and *much a liar*,” the last phrase is the same with *much given* to lying. And when the Scripture declares, of the pharisee’s profelyte, that he is *more a child of bell*, the meaning is, that he is *more liable* to punishment, because more wicked; and therefore, the words *a child of bell*, have the import of an adjective.

Pronouns, as they supply the place of nouns, must, like them, be incapable of comparison. It is true, we say in English the *very same*, and in Plautus we find *Ipsissimus* the superlative of *ipse* or *ipsus*. But these are redundancies. For *the same*, and *ipse*, express all that can be meant by *the very same*, and *ipsissimus*. Many such superfluities find their way into the language of conversation; but in solemn and elegant style it is better to avoid them.

Adjectives, whereof the meaning is already as extensive as it can be, as *omnis*, *cunctus*, *totus*, *universus*; and those that denote exact figure, or definite quantity or number, admit not of degrees of comparison, because they are unsusceptible of *more* and *less*. Seven grains of sand are as much and as really *seven*, as seven planets. My *two-foot* rule is as much a two-foot rule as yours. One circle cannot be *more circular* than another. We may say, however, that one *figure* is *more circular* than another *figure*. But in this example the adjective signifies, not exact figure, but *approaching to the figure of a circle*; and therefore, being, in respect of the figure, indefinite, is capable of more and less, and consequently of comparison.

How many *degrees* of comparison are there? Every school-boy can answer, Three; for three are mentioned by name in his grammar. How many parts are in an inch? A common joiner would perhaps answer, Eight, or Ten; for that is the number marked on

his foot-rule. But if we consider this matter philosophically, we shall see reason to affirm, that the degrees of comparison are, like the parts of an inch, infinite in number, or at least indefinite.—A mountain is larger than a mite:—by how many degrees? How much bigger is the earth than a grain of sand? By how many degrees was Socrates wiser than Alcibiades? or Cleopatra more beautiful than Octavia? or Varro more learned than Cato? Or by how many degrees is snow whiter than this paper? It is plain, that to these and the like questions no *definite* answers can be returned.

In quantities, however, that may be *exactly* measured, the degrees of excess may be exactly ascertained, and definitely expressed. A foot is just twelve times as long as an inch; and a man seven feet high is double the height of one of forty-two inches. But in regard to *qualities*, and to those quantities which cannot be measured exactly, it is impossible to say how many degrees may be comprehended in the comparative excess.

But though these degrees be infinite or indefinite in fact, they cannot be so in language. Nor would it be convenient, if language were to express many of them. More need not be expressed than two; the first, to signify simple excess, which is commonly called the Comparative; and the other to denote very great excess, or the greatest, which has obtained the name of the Superlative.\* As to the Positive degree of comparison, which grammarians talk of, it is nothing more than the simple form of the adjective, and implies not either comparison or degree. The reason, says Ruddiman, why it has been accounted one of the three degrees, is, because the other two are founded upon and formed from it.

But how is it possible by two words to express accurately the various degrees of more and less, in which the same attribute may

\* The expression here is too brief to be accurate; but it will be more fully explained by and by.

appear in those things that we compare together? I answer, that, in measured quantities, and in qualities that may be ascertained by the application of quantity, this is easily done by means of numbers:—as, a foot is *twelve* times longer than an inch; an hour is *sixty* times longer than a minute; boiling water is *one hundred and sixteen* degrees hotter than the human blood.—In regard to unmeasured quantities and qualities, I answer, that the degrees of more and less may be expressed, intelligibly, at least, if not accurately, by adverbs, or words of like import:—as, Socrates was *much* wiser than Alcibiades; Snow is *a great deal* whiter than this paper; Epaminondas was *far* the most accomplished of the Thebans; the evening-star is a glorious object, but the sun is *incomparably* more glorious; the Deity is *infinitely* greater than the greatest of his creatures. The inaccuracy of these and the like expressions is not a material inconvenience; and, though it were, it is unavoidable; for human speech can only express human thought; and where thought is necessarily inaccurate, language must be so too.

Sanctius, the author of a grammatical treatise called *Minerva*, maintains, that the Superlative degree does not imply comparison. But, though he was a learned man, I must differ from him in this, as in many other things: and the less regard is due to his judgment, as he seems to have written with a view to establish paradoxes, and abuse the grammarians. To me the Superlative seems to be as really a comparative, as the Comparative itself. But that this may appear with full evidence, I must observe, that, in all the languages I know, and probably in all others, there are two Superlatives; which, though similar in meaning, are different in their use. The first may be called the superlative of comparison; the second, the superlative of eminence.

1. When I say, that Cato was *more learned* than Marius, and that Varro was *the most learned* of all the Romans; is not a comparison

parison of Varro with other learned Romans as plainly implied in the last clause, as a comparison of Cato with Marius is in the first? For I would ask, whether one who had never known or heard of any other Roman could truly and rationally say, “that no other Roman was so learned as Varro;” a sentiment, which is plainly signified when we say, that Varro was the most learned of all the people of Rome; and which no man (who had any regard to sense or truth) would entertain, or express, till after a comparison had actually been made. So in this example, “Socrates was wiser than any other Athenian, but Solomon was the wisest of men,” Socrates is compared with the Athenians, and Solomon with mankind in general.

What then, it may be said, if both imply comparison, is the difference between the Comparative and the Superlative? Is it, that the superlative always expresses a *greater excess* than the Comparative? No. Socrates was the *wisest* of the Athenians, but Solomon was *wiser* than Socrates:—here a higher superiority of wisdom is denoted by the comparative *wiser*, than by the superlative *wisest*.—Is it, because the Superlative implies a comparison of *one with many*, while the comparative implies a comparison of *one with one*? No: this is not always the case neither. The Psalmist says, that “he is *wiser than all his teachers* ;” where, though the comparative is used, there is a comparison of *one with many*.—The real difference between these two degrees of comparison may be explained thus.

When we use the Superlative, it is in consequence of having compared individuals with the species to which they belong, or one or more species with the genus under which they are comprehended. Thus, *Socrates was the wisest of the Athenians; the Athenians were the most learned of antient nations; Homer, Virgil, and Milton, are the greatest of poets*:—where observe, that Socrates, though compared with his countrymen, is at the same time con-

sidered as one of them; that the Athenians, though compared with antient nations, are considered as one of those nations; and that Homer, Virgil, and Milton are considered as three individuals of that species of authors, with whom they are compared, and to whom it is affirmed that they are superiour. And hence, this superlative is in modern language followed by the preposition *of*, and in Greek and Latin by the genitive case of the plural; to signify, that the object, which has the pre-eminence, is considered as *belonging to that class* of things or persons, with which it is compared.

But, when we use the comparative degree, the objects compared are set in *direct opposition*, and the one is not considered as a part of the other, or as comprehended under it. If I say, “Cicero was more eloquent than the Romans,” I speak absurdly; because every body knows, that of the class of men expressed by the word *Romans* Cicero was one: but when I say, that Cicero was more eloquent than all the *other* Romans, or than any *other* Roman, I speak not absurdly; because, though the persons spoken of were all of the same class or city, yet Cicero is here set in contradistinction to the rest of his countrymen, and is not considered as one of the persons with whom he is compared.—Moreover, if the Psalmist had said, “I am the wisest of my teachers,” the phrase would have been improper, because implying that he was one of them: but when he says, “I am wiser than my teachers,” he does not consider himself as one of them, but sets himself in contradistinction to them.—Again, “Solomon was the wisest of men:”—here Solomon is compared with a species of beings whereof he himself was one, and therefore the Superlative is used: but “Solomon was of men the wiser,” is nonsense, (at least in English) because the use of the comparative would imply, that *he* was set in opposition to *mankind*; which is so far from being the case, that he is expressly considered as one of them.

In English we cannot say, "he is the tallest of the two;" it must be, "the taller of the two:" nor do we say, "he is the taller of the three;" it must be "the tallest." But this does not hold universally in other languages. The Greeks sometimes have the superlative, where we should use the comparative. \* *Outis allê dusuckejlatê gunê emou pepbuken*: "there is no other woman *most* wretched than I;" or, (to give the meaning in better English) "there is no other woman more superlatively wretched." They also use the comparative instead of the superlative. "And now, abide (says the Apostle) Faith, Hope, Charity; these three; but the *greater* of these is Charity:" for the word in Greek is † *meizôn* and not ‡ *megistê*. Or we might render it thus: "And now abide Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but greater than those (that is, than faith and hope) is charity." In like manner, it is said in the Gospel, that "a grain of mustard-seed is the *smaller* of all seeds; but when grown up, it is the *greater* of herbs." In both these places, our Translators have preserved the English idioms. — Some examples of the same kind may be found in Latin authors: but they are not frequent, either in Latin, or in Greek.

2. The other Superlative I took the liberty to call the superlative of *eminence*. It denotes very great excess or defect, but is not joined to any words that directly intimate comparison: as when we say, Cicero was a *very eloquent*, or a *most eloquent* man; St. Kilda is a *very small* island; a mouse is a *most diminutive* quadruped.

Yet even in this Superlative, it may be said, that something of comparison seems to be remotely or indirectly intimated; that, for example, when we say, "he is a very tall man," it must be understood, that we compare the person spoken of with other men, or his stature with the ordinary human stature. This is true: but

\* *Outis allê dusuckejlatê gunê emou pepbuken.*

† *Meizôn.*

‡ *Megistê.*

yet we cannot affirm, that comparison is more clearly intimated in this superlative, than in the simple attributive *tall*; for when we say, “ he is a tall man,” we must be understood to make the same reference to the ordinary size of men. So when we say, “ Solomon was a most wise, or a very wise man,” we do indeed distinguish him from other men who were not so wise: but we mark a distinction of the same kind, though not the same in degree, when we say simply, that “ Solomon was wise.” Whereas, in the use of the former superlative, the comparison is direct and particular: for we not only express great superiority or inferiority, but also mention the persons or things that are superiour, as well as those that are inferiour.

In English, we distinguish these superlatives, by prefixing to the one the definite article *the*, subjoining the preposition *of* or *among*, with the name of the species or class of things compared; as “ Solomon was the wisest of (or among) men: Hector was the most valiant of (or among) the Trojans.” To the other superlative we only prefix the indefinite article *a*: “ he was a very good man; he is a most valiant soldier.” And observe, that our Superlative termination *est* is peculiar to the former: we may say “ Homer was the sublimest, or the most sublime, of poets;” but we cannot say, “ Homer was a sublimest poet;” it must be, “ Homer was a most sublime, or a very sublime poet.” — Now, in Italian, the rule is contrary; for the superlative termination denotes what I call the superlative of eminence, *Cicerone fu eloquentissimo*, Cicero was most eloquent, or very eloquent, or Cicero was a most eloquent man: and the superlative of comparison is expressed by the adverb *piu* or *more*, which, with the definite article *il* prefixed, assumes the signification of *most*; as *Cicerone fu il piu eloquente dei Romani*, Cicero was the most eloquent of the Romans.

In a word, (that I may not take up more time with the peculiarities of individual tongues) different nations may have different contrivances for expressing these degrees of comparison; but in one way or other it seems necessary that they should be expressed in all languages.

In Hebrew, the comparison of adjectives is intimated, not by inflection, but by the aid of a preposition. Thus, in the comparative, "Wisdom is better than rubies," would be literally "Wisdom is good above rubies." In the superlative of comparison, "He is the best of them all," would be, "He is good above them all." And, for marking the superlative of eminence, they use adverbs corresponding to our *most*, *very*, &c. This method is extremely simple, and yet quite sufficient for the purpose.

As I have here mentioned the Hebrew, and shall have occasion to speak of it once and again in the sequel, I think it my duty to say, that for the little knowledge I have of the analogy of that language I am indebted to my amiable friend and colleague, Dr. Campbell; who in his *Philosophy of Rhetorick*, and other works, has given many proofs of elegance as a writer, and of uncommon penetration as a philosopher and critick; and who will soon (I hope) make an important addition to the Theological Literature of his country, by a new version of the four Gospels, with explanatory notes and critical Dissertations: a work for which he is eminently qualified; not only by his natural talents and philological accuracy, but also by his comprehensive knowledge of the languages, and by that indefatigable zeal for religious truth, which has engaged him to make the study of the holy scriptures a great part of his daily employment for many years.



## S E C T. II.

*The Subject of Attributives continued. — Of Verbs; — their general nature investigated, and expressed in a definition. — Conjectures in regard to the Greek and Latin inflections.*

THE Adjective denotes a simple quality: the Participle, a quality with time\*: the Verb, a quality and time together with an assertion. This account was already given, to distinguish these attributives from one another. But Verbs being of all words the most complex and most curious, it will now be proper, to inquire more minutely into their nature; and to show, from what modifications of human thought they derive their origin.

We are endowed, not only with senses to perceive, and with memory to retain; but also with reason and judgment, whereby we attend to things, and compare them together, so as to perceive their characters and mutual relations. Thus I not only *perceive* the men whom I see to-day, and *remember* those whom I saw yesterday; but also *form judgments* concerning them: and those judgments I express, when I say, that one is strong, another weak; one tall, another short; one young, another old; one good, another bad; one wise, another foolish, &c.

Take now any one of these judgments, and express it by itself; Solomon est sapiens, Solomon is wise. — Concerning these three words, I observe, first, that they form a sentence, or a complete enunciation of thought: secondly, that if the word *est, is,* were left out, the other two words, *Solomon wise,* or *wise Solomon,* would not form a sentence: thirdly, that a substance or object is here

\* See the fifth section of this chapter.

mentioned, *Solomon*, and a quality, *wife*; and that the one is *affirmed* to be the character of the other: and, fourthly, that if it were not for the same word *est*, *is*, nothing would be affirmed of either the quality or the object; for *wife Solomon* or *Solomon wife* contain no affirmation. Now the word *is*, or *est*, is one of those words which are called *verbs*.—May we not then say, that “it is the nature of a verb, first, to express an affirmation; and, secondly, to form, when united with a noun and a quality, a complete sentence?”

Before I proceed, it may be necessary to remark, that a sentence comprehending a *thing*, a *quality*, and an *affirmation*, is in Logick called a *proposition*; of which, the thing spoken of is the *subject*; the quality, affirmed, or denied, to belong to the subject, is the *predicate*; and the word, or words, containing the affirmation or negation, are the *copula*. Thus, in the last example, *Solomon* is the *subject* of the proposition; *is*, the *copula*; and *wife*, the *predicate*. Thus, in the following proposition, “To be just is commendable,” *to be just* is the *subject*, or that concerning which the affirmation is made; *is*, the *copula*; and *commendable*, the *predicate*, or that which is affirmed of the subject.—Let it be further observed in this place, that every proposition is either affirmative, or negative; that is, affirms or asserts, that the predicate either *does agree* with the subject, or *does not agree* with it. When I say, “God is good,” I pronounce an affirmative proposition: when I say, “Poverty is not criminal,” I utter a negative proposition, wherein I affirm or assert, that *criminal* the predicate *does not agree* with *poverty* the subject. Every proposition, therefore, whether affirmative or negative, does still *imply* affirmation or assertion: for, to deny that a thing is, is to affirm that it is not; to say that “Pain is not good,” is the same thing with saying, “that it *is* evil,” or “that *it is* indifferent.”—Of propositions positively affirmative the verb alone

alone is the copula; as “God is good:” such as are negatively affirmative have for their copula both the verb and the negative particle, as “Poverty *is not* criminal.”—This being premised concerning propositions, I resume the subject of verbs.

I said, that a verb is “a species of word, which expresses an affirmation, and which may form, when united with a name and a quality, a complete sentence.”—It may be worth while to consider, whether the latter clause of this definition does not comprehend the former; that is, whether every sort of *sentence* does not express or imply affirmation.

Sentences are of various kinds. A single word may convey the full import of a sentence. And this may happen in every part of speech; the article and conjunction excepted, which can never stand by themselves, because they have no meaning, unless when they are joined with other words.

First; a single noun may stand for a sentence, and imply an affirmation. One asks, “Is Virgil or Lucan the better poet?” I answer, “Virgil.” And this word thus connected comprehends an entire affirmative sentence; “Virgil *is* the better poet.”—Secondly, A pronoun may be a sentence. If it be asked, “Is he or she to blame?” and answered, *He*; this single pronoun is equivalent to the following affirmative proposition, “He *is* blameable.”—Thirdly, An adjective may in its meaning be equally comprehensive. “Is the day good or bad?” says one. I answer, “Good:” which means, “the day *is* good.”—Fourthly, the same thing holds true of the participle. “Is he running or walking?” *Running*, may be the answer; which being resolved amounts to “He *is* running.”—Fifthly, A verb often comprehends a sentence, especially in the antient languages. *Albeo*; that is, *Ego sum albus*, I *am* white: *Dormit*; *Ille est dormiens*; He *is* asleep.—Sixthly, An adverb may stand for an affirmative sentence. “Are you sick?”

it is asked. I answer, *No*; which is the same as if I had answered, negatively, “ I *am not* sick,” or, positively, “ I *am* well.”—Seventhly, An interjection often contains a sentence with affirmation; as when one tells me a melancholy tale, and I only answer, “ Alas!” which implies, “ I *am* sorry.”—Eighthly, A preposition may be an affirmative sentence; “ Was Virgil before Livy, or after?” The answer is *Before*; which is as truly an affirmative sentence in this connection, as if I had said “ Virgil *was* before Livy.”

Nay, even a conjunction, an article, or a letter, when taken *materially*, as the Grammarians say, that is, when put for itself, and not as the sign of any thing else, may in a certain connection amount to a complete affirmative sentence. “ *Is yet* or *nevertheless* “ the more common adverbative conjunction?” Answer; *Yet*: which implies, *Yet is* the more common.—“ What is the definite “ article in English?” Answer; *The*: that is, *The is* the definite article.—“ What letter in our language is most offensive to the “ ear of a foreigner?” Answer, *S*; or *S is* the most offensive.—All the sentences hitherto specified do plainly imply an affirmation; and that affirmation is expressed by *is* or *was*, or some other part of the verb *esse*, *to be*.

Moreover, Every sentence contains a verb expressed or understood; and that verb must be in one or other of those forms, which Grammarians call *moods*. Now every mood has a particular meaning, and gives a peculiar character to the sentence: and, therefore, simple sentences may be divided into as many sorts, as there are supposed to be moods in a verb. I shall give an example of each; and it will appear, that whatever be the mood of the verb, or the form of the sentence, there is still in every sentence an affirmation, or assertion, either expressed, or implied. First, “ He *is* good,” is an *indicative* and affirmative sentence: and the same thing may be said of “ He *is not* good;” which in a positive form may be expressed

pressed thus, "He *is* evil."—Secondly, "I know not whether he "be good," Nescio an bonus sit, is a sentence, wherein the *subjunctive* mood is used; and, if analysed, will appear to be an affirmative proposition to this purpose, "That he is good (or, his goodness) *is* to me unknown."—Thirdly, We use the mood called *Potential*, when we say, "He may be good," Licet illi esse bono; or "He ought to be good," Debet esse bonus; which are also affirmative sentences, and may be otherwise expressed, "To be "good *is* in his power," and "To be good *is* his duty."—Fourthly, When we say, "May he be good," the mood is *optative*; and the words comprehend the following affirmation, "That he should "be good *is* what I wish for."—Fifthly, When I ask, "Is he good?" the mood is *interrogative*; and the question may be resolved so as to have the same character with the foregoing propositions: "It *is* "my desire to be informed, whether he be good."—Sixthly, "Be "thou good," Esto bonus, which is the mood called *imperative*, implies also an affirmation to this purpose, "It *is* my command, "or it *is* my intreaty, that thou shouldst be good."—These are the principal moods acknowledged by grammarians: how many of them may be *necessary* in language, will appear hereafter.—As to the *infinitive* mood, I shall show in another place, that it partakes more of the nature of an abstract noun, than of a verb; for it denotes no affirmation, and only expresses the pure meaning of the attributive, abstracted from all considerations of number and person.

Having proved, more minutely perhaps than was needful, that every sentence may be made affirmative; and it having been observed before, that, in order to express affirmation, a verb is necessary in every sentence; it remains, that a verb (according to the view we have hitherto taken of it) may be defined, "A word, "necessary in every sentence, and signifying affirmation."

Now in all the sorts of sentences hitherto considered, the affirmation is, or may be, expressed by that verb, which the Latins call *substantive*, but the Greeks, more properly, a verb of existence, \* *esti, est, is*. If then this verb may alone express every species of affirmation, it would seem to follow, that no other verb is necessary in language. And, in fact, no other is so necessary as this: nay, if it were as natural, or as convenient, for men to signify their meaning in many words, as in few, and to call every thing by its own name, as to express some things figuratively, we might perhaps affirm, that no other verb is *necessary*, nor any other form of it, but the third person singular of the present of the indicative, *est, is*.

But with the bare necessities of life the most needy savage is not contented; he aspires after convenience, and has even a taste for ornament. And, in framing language, as in every other work, all men are more or less actuated by the same motives; and, for the sake of elegance, as well as of utility, substitute one word for another, and crowd the meaning of two or three into one; and sometimes diversify the same word with a number of inflections, so as to give it the power of expressing, without the aid of other words, a great variety of human thoughts. These contrivances are more observable in Greek and Latin, than in the modern tongues, and in the verb more than in any other part of speech. I have hitherto considered this attributive in its simplest, and most necessary form, as signifying pure affirmation. I now proceed to show, how it comes to be more complex, by being applied to other purposes.

Some truths are eternal and unalterable; as, God is good; Virtue is praiseworthy; The three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. To express the affirmation contained in these, and

\* *esti*.

the like propositions, the verb of existence *is, est*, is alone sufficient: for truths like these have no dependence on time, place, or person, but are at all times, and on all occasions, invariably the same.

It may be said, that the third person *plural* of this verb, *Sunt, Are*, is equally necessary with the third person singular; because the subject of a proposition may be *many*, as well as *one*. And it is true, that, in all the languages we know, custom has made this third person plural necessary, by determining, that the verb shall agree in number with its nominative. But if custom had determined otherwise, we might have done without it. If I were to say, “ Health, peace, and a good name, *is* desirable;” there would be a fault in the syntax, but nobody could be at a loss to know my meaning: and, if custom had not subjoined a plural verb to a plural nominative, or to two or more singular nominatives, there would have been no fault in the syntax. For, in old English, a verb singular sometimes follows a plural nominative; as in the following couplet from Shakspeare’s *Venus and Adonis*,

She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,  
Where lo, two *lamps* burnt out in darkness *lies*.

The same idiom prevails in the Scotch acts of parliament, in the vernacular writings of Scotch men prior to the last century, and in the vulgar dialect of North Britain to this day: and, even in England, the common people frequently speak in this manner, without being misunderstood. Nay in Greek, which some affirm to be the most perfect of all languages; and in the Greek of Attica, which is allowed to be the most elegant dialect, the nominative plural of a noun of the neuter gender, and sometimes even of masculine and feminine nouns, is followed by the third person singular of the verb. And that, if the laws of the language had permitted, the same thing might have obtained without inconvenience in all cases

whatever, will not, I think, be denied by any person who considers the matter impartially.

But innumerable affirmations there are, which have a necessary connection with *time*. That may be true now, which was not true yesterday, and will not be true tomorrow. I may affirm concerning actions, that *have been performed*, or that *are now performing*, or that *will be performed hereafter*. Hence it would appear, that in a verb there must be some contrivance for expressing *time*.— I believe, however, it might be possible to frame a language, wherein past, present, and future time, as connected with affirmation, should be expressed by adverbs, or other auxiliary words: but this would make speech very unwieldy; and in fact we have no reason to think, that there is such a language on earth. If therefore we consider speech, not as it *might be*, but as it *is*, we must enlarge the definition of a verb formerly given; and call it, “ A word, “ necessary in every sentence, and signifying affirmation (or assertion) with time.” According to this idea, we may, by means of the verb alone, and without having recourse to auxiliary words, affirm, or assert, not only what *is*, but also what *was*, and what *will be*.

Moreover, affirmations often have a connection with *persons*, as well as with time. I may affirm something concerning a quality, which belongs, or did belong, or will belong, to *me*, to *you*, or to *another*. *I am* reading; *you are* hearing; *he is* attentive: *I spoke*; *ye were* told; *he was* ignorant: *I shall write*; *you will be* undeceived; *he will be* thankful. This might be done, and often is, by prefixing to the verb the name of the person or persons spoken of. But I may have occasion to affirm concerning the qualities of a person whose name I know not: and if, in speaking of myself, I were to use my own proper name prefixed to the verb, it would not be known, in many cases, to the hearer, whether I were speaking of  
myself,



myself, or of some other person of the same name. In a word, the same reasons, that prove the expediency of using pronouns instead of proper names, will also prove the necessity or propriety, of contriving the verb so as that it may express three persons; the first person, when one affirms any thing concerning one's self, *I am*; the second, when one affirms concerning the person to whom one speaks, *thou art*; the third, when one affirms concerning another, *he is*.

This *might* be effected by the simple contrivance of prefixing the personal pronouns to the verb, without any variation of the verb itself. For, though the Latins say, *nos sumus, vos estis, illi sunt*; giving to each person a different form of the verb; we express ourselves as *intelligibly*, when in English we say, *we are, ye are, they are*. And if this is intelligible in the plural, it must have been equally so in the singular, if custom had permitted us to say, *I am, thou am, he am*; or *I is, thou is, he is*. In fact, *I is*, or *Ise*, instead of *I am*, is frequent in Yorkshire; and by illiterate people the pronoun of the first person is often coupled with the verb of the third, as *I thinks, I goes*; nay, *says I* may be met with in good English authors, as well as in common conversation. From all which we may infer (these barbarisms being equally intelligible with the Grammatical phrases) that different inflections of the verb are not *necessary* to express the different persons. Yet, in all the languages we know, different inflections of the verb are used, more sparingly in English than in most other European tongues, and in Greek and Latin with very great variety; which, as will be observed hereafter, is one chief cause of the superior elegance and harmony of these languages.

As affirmations may be made concerning *one* person, or concerning *more than one*, it is obvious, that the verb must express *number* as well as *person*: *Sumus, we are*, being as necessary in lan-

guage as *Sum, I am*. But if the plural pronoun be prefixed, a change in the verb, however elegant, is not *necessary* for expressing number. For in the English conjunctive mood, we say, without any ambiguity, *if I go, if thou go, if he go, if we go, if ye go, if they go*. And if this be done in one mood, without inconvenience, it might be done in another. Custom alone would soon render, *We am, ye am, they am*, as expressive as *we are, ye are, they are*.

Our idea of a verb, thus enlarged, will give rise to the following definition. "A verb is a word, necessary in every sentence, signifying affirmation, or assertion, with the designation of time, person, and number."

But, if we consider language, not as it might be in its rude state, but as it has been actually improved in many, and perhaps in all nations, we shall soon be satisfied, that we have not yet completed the idea of a verb. In fact, the definition now given expresses only the nature of that verb, which the Latins call *substantive*, *Sum, Fio, Forem, Existo*, and the Greeks *the verb of existence*, \* *eimi, ginomai, pelomai, tunchanô, huparchô*.

As our thoughts shift with great rapidity, it seems natural, that those, who would by adequate utterance do justice to what they think, should rather shorten, than lengthen their expression. Hence, in most languages, the words that are in continual use, as personal pronouns, articles, and the most common connectives, are generally short. Hence, too, that tendency which we have in conversation, to join two words in one, as *dont* for *do not*, *shant* for *shall not*, *ant* for *are not*, *int* for *is not*. And hence those multitudes of elliptical phrases to be found in every language. It needs not then seem wonderful, that men should express two or more meanings by one word, when that can be done conveniently.

\* *Εἰμι, γίνομαι, πέλομαι, τυγχάνω, ὑπάρχω.*

Now some meanings more easily coalesce than others. Between the attribute which is affirmed to belong to any substance, and the affirmation itself, there is a very close affinity; and we naturally comprehend both in one word, and say, I *go*, instead of I *am going*; He *spoke*, instead of he *was speaking*.

And thus our idea of the verb is completed. And we may now define it, “A word, necessary in every sentence, signifying the “*affirmation of some attribute, together with the designation of “time, number, and person.*”—Thus *lego, I read*, expresses the attribute *reading*, and *affirms* that attribute to belong, at the present *time*, to *one person*, which person is *myself*. So that this word *lego*, when analysed, is found to comprehend these five meanings; *I*, the *person*, and *one person*; *am*, the *affirmation*; *now*, the *time*; and *reading*, the *attribute*: which all together form a complete proposition, including a subject, a predicate, and a copula, and withal intimating unity of person, and present time.

But the verbs of all languages are not quite so complex: and the foregoing definition is applicable, rather to Greek and Latin verbs, than to those of our modern tongues. In English, the person must always be joined to the verb, in the form either of a noun or of a pronoun: for *read, readest, reads*, do not, like *lego, legis, legit*, form a sentence, without their respective pronouns, or nominatives, *I read, thou readest, he reads*, or *Alexander reads*. In English verbs, too, time past is frequently, and time future always, expressed by auxiliary words, as *shall, will, have, had, was, did, &c*; whereas in Latin, and some other tongues, these varieties of time are signified by the inflections of the verb, *lego, legebat, legerat, &c*. In like manner, those changes in the *manner* of affirmation, which give rise to what Grammarians call the *modes* or *moods* of verbs, are signified in English by auxiliary words; but in some languages are expressed by varying the form of the verb. Thus *legisset* in Latin

is in English *he might have read*; the person being expressed by the pronoun *he*; the mood, by the auxiliary *might*; the time, by *might*, *have*, and *read*, conjunctly; and the attribute, by the participle *read*.—Is it not self-evident, that those tongues which comprehend so much meaning in their verbs, must be more expressive and harmonious, than those that are forced to have recourse to so many auxiliaries?

Auxiliary words, however, are not unknown either in the Latin verb, or in the Greek. In the passive of the former, the *indicative* perfect and plusquamperfect, and the *subjunctive* perfect, plusquamperfect, and future, are inflected by means of the verb of existence, and the participle of time past, as *amatus eram*, *amatus fuero*, &c. And in the perfect and plusquamperfect of the *subjunctive* and *optative* of the Greek passive verbs, there is a similar contrivance.

But in our modern verbs and nouns the variety of auxiliary words is much greater. For the northern nations, who overturned the Roman empire, and established themselves in the conquered provinces, being an unlettered race of men, would not take the trouble either to impart their own language to the Romans, or to learn theirs with any degree of exactness: but, blending words and idioms of their own with Latin words inaccurately acquired, or imperfectly remembered, and finding it too great a labour to master all the inflections of that language, fell upon a simpler, though less elegant, artifice, of supplying the place of cases, moods, and tenses, with one or more auxiliary words, joined to nouns, verbs, and participles. And hence, in the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French languages, the greater part of the words are Latin (for the conquered were more in number than the conquerors); but so disguised are those words, by the mixture of northern idioms, and by the slovenly expedient now hinted at, as to have become at once like the Latin, and very different from it.—The antient Greek,

compared with the modern, is found to have undergone alterations somewhat similar, but not so great. For with the northern invaders the Greeks were never so thoroughly incorporated, as were the Europeans of the west: and, when conquered by the Turks, they maintained their religion, and so preserved their language from total depravation, though they could not prevent its debasement.

On many topicks, it is easier to propose than to solve difficulties, and to ask questions than to answer them. What is hinted in the last paragraph may be thought to account for the multitude of auxiliary words that belong to the verbs and nouns of modern Europe. But, for the multitude of *Inflections*, that are found in the nouns and verbs of the antient languages, how are we to account? Why did not the Greeks and Romans abound in auxiliary words as much as we?

Was it, because their languages, like regular towns and fortifications, were *made* by men of learning; who planned them before they existed, with a view to the renown of the poets, philosophers, and orators, who were to compose in them, as well as to the convenience of the people, who were to speak them: while the modern tongues, like poor villages that extend their bounds irregularly, are the rude work of a barbarous people, who, without looking before or behind them, on the right hand, or on the left, threw their coarse materials together, with no other view, than just to answer the exigency of the present hour? — This theory is agreeable to the ideas of some learned authors: but, if we pay any regard to history, or believe that human exertions are proportioned to human abilities, and that the Greeks and Romans were like other men, we cannot acquiesce in it.

They who first spoke Greek and Latin were certainly not less ignorant, nor less savage, than were those moderns, among whom  
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arose the Italian, the Spanish, the French, and the English languages. If these last were formed gradually, and without plan or method, why should we believe, that the Classick tongues were otherwise formed? Are they more regular than the modern? In some respects they may be so; and it is allowed, and will be proved in the sequel, that they are more elegant: for, of two towns that are built without a plan, it is not difficult to imagine, that the one may be more convenient and more beautiful than the other. But every polite tongue has its own rules; and the English, that is according to rule, is not less regular than the Greek that is according to rule; and a deviation from the established use of the language is as much an irregularity in the one as in the other: nor are the modes of the Greek tongue more uniform in Xenophon and Plato, or of the Latin in Cicero and Cesar, than those of the English are in Addison and Swift, or those of the French in Rollin, Vertot, and Fenelon.

But why should the inflections of language be considered as a proof of refinement and art, and the substitution of auxiliary words as the work of chance and of barbarism? Nay, what evidence can be brought to show, that the inflections of the Classick tongues were not originally formed out of obsolete auxiliary words prefixed, or subjoined, to nouns and verbs, or otherwise incorporated with their radical letters? Some learned men are of opinion, that this was actually the case. And though the matter does not now admit of a direct proof, the analogy of other languages, antient as well as modern, gives plausibility to the conjecture.

The inflections of Hebrew nouns and verbs may upon this principle be accounted for. The cases of the former are marked by a change made in the beginning of the word; and this change is nothing more than a contracted preposition prefixed, answering to the English *of*, *to*, *from*: as if, instead of *animal*, *of animal*, *to animal*,

*animal*, from *animal*, we were to pronounce and write *animal*, *fanimal*, *tanimal*, *franimal*; which, if we were accustomed to speak so, would be as intelligible to us, as *animal*, *animalis*, *animali*, were to the Romans. — Of the Hebrew verb, in like manner, the persons are marked by contracted pronouns subjoined or prefixed to the radical letters. Thus, *masar*, he delivered; *masartba*, thou deliveredst, from *masar* the root, and *atba*, thou; *masartbi*, I delivered, from *masar*, and *aotbi*, me, &c. And in Erse, a very ancient species of Celtick, most of the inflections of the nouns and verbs may, if I am not misinformed, be analysed in a way somewhat similar.

If the English, and other modern tongues, had been spoken for ages before they were written (which we have reason to think was the case with the Greek and Latin) it is probable, that many of our auxiliaries would have been shortened and softened, and at length incorporated with the radical words, so as to assume the form of initial or final inflections. For it is while they are only spoken, and not written, that languages are most liable to alterations of this kind; as they become in some degree stationary from the moment they begin to be visible in writing. But we know, that writing was practised in many, and perhaps in most European nations, previously to the very existence of the modern languages: from which we may infer, that attempts would be made to write those languages almost as soon as to speak them. And if thus our auxiliary words were kept distinct in the beginning, and marked as such by our first writers, it is no wonder that they should have remained distinct ever since.

Had the Greek and Latin tongues been ascertained by writing at as early a period of their existence, their fate would perhaps have been similar: and their inflections might now, like those of the Hebrew, have been easily analysed, and found to be auxiliary

words shortened and softened by colloquial use, and gradually incorporated with the radical part of the original nouns and verbs. But it was the misfortune of the modern languages (if it can be called a misfortune) that their form was in some measure fixed, before it became so complete as it might have been; that, without passing through the intermediate stages of childhood and youth, they rose at once (if I may so speak) from infancy to premature manhood: and in regard to the Claffick tongues it was a lucky circumstance, that their growth advanced more gradually, and that their form was not established by writing, till after it had been variously rounded and moulded by the casual pronunciation of successive ages. Hence, if there be any truth in these conjectures (for they lay claim to no higher character) it will follow, that the Greek and Latin tongues are for this reason peculiarly elegant; because they who first spoke them were long in a savage state; and that the modern languages are for this reason less elegant, because the nations among whom they took their rise were not savage. This looks very like a paradox. And yet, is it not more probable, than any thing which can be advanced in favour of that contrary supposition, adopted by some learned men, that the Claffick tongues were planned by philosophers, and the modern languages jumbled rudely into form by barbarians?

Before I proceed, it may be proper to observe, that several definitions of the verb have been admitted by Grammarians, different from that which I have given, and some of them perhaps equally good. — Some have defined it thus: “A verb is a word, which forms, when joined to a noun, a complete sentence.” This is certainly true of the verb, and of no other part of speech; but does not sufficiently express its character, as proceeding from an operation of the mind. — Others have said, that a verb is “a word signifying *to be*, *to do*, and *to suffer*.” And true it is, that most  
of



of those attributives, which have a connection with persons and times, may be referred to one or other of these three classes. But this definition does not mark the difference between the verb and the participle; because it omits the affirmation, which is the verb's most essential character. — Ruddiman has very well expressed the nature of a Latin verb, in these words, “ Verbum est pars orationis “ variabilis, aliquid de aliqua re dici seu affirmari significans.” “ A verb is a variable part of speech, signifying, that some affirmation or assertion is made concerning some thing.” — Aristotle says \* *Rhéma esti to prosthémaiton chronou*: “ A verb is that which “ signifies time, together with some other signification.” But this appears to me to be very inaccurate: for it neither distinguishes the participle from the verb; nor takes any notice of the attribute or of the affirmation, both which belong essentially to all verbs whatever. Nay, according to this definition, certain adverbs, as *diu, heri, nudiustertius, cras, hodie, &c.* would be verbs; for they express time, and withal signify, that the time is *long*, that it is limited to *yesterday*, to *the day before yesterday*, to *tomorrow*, to the *present day*, &c. — Buxtorff calls the verb *Vox flexilis cum tempore et persona*, “ a declinable word with time and person,” which likewise overlooks both the affirmation and the attribute. — Some grammarians have said, that “ a verb is a word signifying actions “ and passions.” But *Sum, I am*, is a verb, and yet it signifies neither the one nor the other, neither acting, nor being acted upon: and *percutiens, striking*, denotes action; and *vulneratus, wounded*, denotes *passion*, in the present sense of the word; and yet both are participles. — Scaliger thought, that “ things fixed, permanent, and lasting,” are signified by nouns, and “ things transient “ and temporary by verbs.” But *hera, ventus, annis, hour, wind,*

\* Ῥήμα ἐστὶ τὸ προσθηματικὸν χρόνου.

*river*, signify things transient, and yet are nouns: and many verbs there are, which denote permanency, as *sedet, stat, est, habitat, dormit, obiit*; *he sits, he stands, he is, he dwells, he sleeps, he died, or ceased to live.*

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### S E C T. III.

*The subject continued. Of the Times or Tenses of verbs. Tenses,*  
 1. *Definite in time.* — 2. *Indefinite in time, or Aorist.* — 3. *Complete, or Perfect, in respect of action.* — 4. *Incomplete, or Imperfect, in respect of action.* — 5. *Compound, uniting two or more times in one.* — 6. *Simple, expressive of one time only.* — *Remarks.*

**I** Hinted, that the attributes, which have a connection with number and person, and may be made the subjects of affirmation, are reducible to one or other of these three heads, *to be, to act,* and *to be acted upon*; to which may be added a fourth, *to rest,* or *cease*, which however may perhaps be implied in the first. Verbs, therefore, there must be in all languages, to express, first, *Being*, as *Sun, I am*; secondly, *Acting*, as *Vulnero, I wound*; thirdly, *Being acted upon*, as *Vulneror, I am wounded*; and fourthly, *Being at rest*, as *Dormio, I sleep, Sedeo, I sit.*

Now, without some reference to *Time*, not one of these attributes can be conceived. For wherever there is *existence*, it must continue for some time, how short soever that time may be: and whatever existence we speak of, we must consider, as past (*he was*), as present (*he is*), or as future (*he will be*); or as both past and

present (he *was* and *is*); or as both present and future (he *is* and *will* be); or as extending through time future, as well as through that which is present and past, as, he *was*, he *is*, and he *will continue* to be.—Further, wherever there is *action* either *exerted* or *received*, there must be *motion*; and all motion implies *time*. For when *many* contiguous places are gone through in a given time, the motion is swift; and when *few* contiguous places are gone through in the same time, the motion is slow.—*Rest*, in like manner, implies duration: for if the want of motion did not continue for some time, we should not know, that there was rest.

Time, therefore, must make a part of the signification of all verbs, and of every part of every verb, in all languages whatever. And this leads me to speak more particularly of the *Times* of verbs, which in English are improperly called the *Tenses*; a word, whose *apparent* etymology would never lead us even to guess at its meaning; and which, if it were not explained to us, we should not think of considering as a corruption of the Latin *tempus*, or of the French *temps*.

Time is naturally divided into Past, Present, and Future. All past time was once present, and all future time will come at last to be present. If therefore we deny the reality of present time, as several philosophers both antient and modern have done, we must also deny the reality of past and future time, and, consequently, of time altogether. Nay more: Sense perceives nothing but what is present, Memory nothing but what is past, and Foresight forms conjectures in regard to futurity. If, therefore, we say, that there is no present time, nor consequently any future or past time, it will follow, that there are no such faculties in man, as sense, memory, and foresight.

The fundamental error in the reasonings of these philosophers, on the subject of time, is, that they suppose the present instant to  
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have, like a geometrical point, neither parts nor magnitude; and that it is nothing more than the commencement of time future, and the conclusion of time past; even as the point, in which two right lines meet and form an angle, being itself of no magnitude, must be considered as the beginning of the one line, and the end of the other.

But, as nothing is, in respect of our senses, a geometrical point, (for whatever we see, or touch, must of necessity have magnitude) so neither is the present, or any other, instant of duration, wholly unextended. Nay, we cannot even conceive an unextended instant: and that which we call the *present* may in fact admit of very considerable extension.—While I write a letter, or read a book, I say, that I *am* reading or writing it, though it should take up an hour, a day, a week, or a month; the whole time being considered as present, which is employed in the present action. So, while I build a house, though that should be the work of many months, I speak of it in the present time, and say that I *am building* it. In like manner, in contradistinction to the century past, and to that which is to come, we may consider the whole space of a hundred years as time present, when we speak of a series of actions, or of a state of existence, that is co-extended with it; as in the following example: “In this century, *we are* more neglectful of the antients, and *we are* consequently more ignorant, than they *were* in the last, or than perhaps they *will be* in the next.” Nay the entire term of man’s probationary state in this world, when opposed to that eternity which is before him, is considered as present time by those who say, “In this state *we see* darkly as through a glass; but in a future life our faith *will be* lost in vision, and *we shall know*, even as we are known.”

Time past, and time future, are, in themselves *infinitely*, and, with respect to man, *indefinitely* extended: and, in speaking of  
time

time past, or of time future, men may have occasion to allude to different periods or extensions of past or future time. And hence, in all the European languages we know, and probably in many other languages, there are in verbs several preterites and futures. Thus, in English, *I did it, I was doing it, I have done it, I had done it,* are plainly distinct preterites: and *I shall do it, I shall be doing it, I am about to do it, I shall have done it,* convey different ideas in regard to the transactions of future time.

But, in describing the necessary *times* or *tenses* of verbs, which is a curious part of science, and the most difficult thing, perhaps, in the grammatical art, I must be somewhat more particular.

As the verbs, that signify *to act* and *to be acted upon*, are of all verbs the most complex, and must therefore have as great a variety of tenses as any other verbs can have, I shall confine myself to them in the following analysis of the tenses. And when I have distributed the tenses of active verbs into their several classes, and explained the nature of each, the subject may be presumed to be sufficiently illustrated.

The first attempt that was made in this nation, so far as I know, towards a philosophical analysis of the tenses, may be seen in a grammar published in Queen Anne's time, and recommended by the *Tatler*, which is commonly called Steele's Grammar. It is in some respects more complete, than any other grammar of the English tongue that I have met with; and discovers a precision and an acuteness not to be found in the other writings of Sir Richard Steele; whence I am inclined to think it is not his. Indeed, from the variety of style and matter, as well as from the Dedication to the Queen, which is subscribed *The Authors*, it would seem to have been the work of several hands.—About twenty years after, Doctor Clarke, in his very learned notes on Homer's *Iliad*, proposed an arrangement of the tenses; which, though imperfect, is ingenious;

and did certainly throw light upon the subject.—Mr. Harris, in his *Hermes*, published in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty one, gave a more complete account of the tenses, than any preceding grammarian. His theory has however been objected to, in many particulars, by the author of a late work *On the origin and progress of language*; who has framed a new one, and a better, which he illustrates with great learning, and grammatical skill — I have looked into all these authors; but, though I have received useful information from each, especially from the last, I am not perfectly satisfied with any one of them. As there is something peculiar in each of their schemes, so is there in that which follows. The truth is, that this is a subject of great nicety; and, being withal very complex, it is no wonder that it should appear in different lights to different persons. That I should think favourably of my own theory, is natural; but it would be arrogance in me to presume, that others will look upon it with equal partiality.

It is impossible to analyse the Tenses, without continual reference to some one language or other. If we take our ideas of them from the Greek and the Latin, we shall be inclined to think, that nine tenses, or ten, or perhaps more, may be useful, or even necessary, in language. But if we were to judge of them according to the rules of some other tongues, we should greatly reduce their number: no more than two, the *past* and the *future*, being acknowledged by the Hebrew grammarian. This ought to be kept in mind, that we may not multiply tenses without necessity: at the same time let it not be forgotten, that, without reasoning from the analogy of the Greek and the Latin, one could not do justice to the subject; those being of all known languages the best cultivated, and the most comprehensive. Besides, in a speculation of this nature, redundance is less faulty than defect. The more minutely we discriminate the tenses, the more clearly we shall see from what modifications of human thought they derive their origin.

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Some will not allow any thing to be a tense, but what in one inflected word expresses an affirmation with time: for that those parts of the verb are not properly called tenses, which assume that appearance by means of auxiliary words. At this rate, in English, we should have two tenses only, the *present* and the *past*, in the active verb, and in the passive no tenses at all. But this is a needless nicety, and, if adopted, would introduce confusion into the Grammatical art. If *amaveram* be a tense, why should not *amatus fueram*? If *I heard* be a tense, *I did hear*, *I have heard*, and *I shall hear*, must be equally entitled to that appellation.

The Tenses of Active verbs I divide, first, in respect of *time*, into *Definite* and *Indefinite*. Those parts of the verb that express time indefinitely may be called *Aorists*. The word is Greek, and signifies *indefinite*: but the forms of the verb denoted by it are not peculiar to the Greek tongue, but must be in all languages, whether Grammarians take notice of them or not. And though, in the Greek Grammar, two *aorists only of past time* are mentioned, it will appear, that there may be, and in most languages probably are, aorists of the future, and even of the present, as well as of the past.

I. 1. When I say, *I read*, or *I am reading*, I express present time *definitely*: for what I affirm of myself holds true at this present moment, but perhaps will not be true the next, and certainly was not true an hour ago, when I was asleep. But when I say, “A merry heart *maketh* a chearful countenance,” I express what is always true, what is not limited to any definite time, and what may be said at any period of present time: that is, in pronouncing this maxim, I use the present tense, but I speak of present time in general, or indefinitely; or, in other words, I use an *aorist of the present*. In all general assertions of this nature, expressed by present time, the tense is the same: as, Manners *make* the man;

The merciful man *regardeth* the life of his beast; The tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel; A wise son *maketh* a glad father; Grande dolori ingenium *est*; Two and two *are* four, &c. And as all men must occasionally speak in this manner, every cultivated language must have a similar contrivance; though there may be, and certainly are, many languages, in which the verb assumes no particular form in order to express it; I mean, no form different from the definite present. How then, you will say, is it known? I answer, By the sense of the words. If a verb of the present tense expresses time indefinitely, that tense is truly an aorist of the present, whatever be its form or termination.

The Hebrews, whose verbs have no present, express the meaning of this tense by the future. They who speak Erse do so too, though that language has a present. And in fact we often do the same, without ambiguity, or any awkward deviation from the idiom of the English tongue. We may say, A prudent man *considers* before he acts, or, A prudent man *will consider* before he act: A wise son *maketh* a glad father, or, A wise son *will make* a glad father. These and the like expressions are equally connected with the present and with the future. We are not supposed to exclude the future, when we affirm their truth with respect to present time: and if the law of the language required that we should *always* express them in future time, we should not be understood to exclude the present, even in sentences like the following; Two and two *will be* four, Virtue *will be* praiseworthy, Honesty *will be* the best policy.

The other present, called here the Definite present, and exemplified by *Lego, I read*, is, in Hebrew, supplied, sometimes by other tenses, but, most commonly, by a present participle active (called *Benoni* \*); and, in particular cases, by an impersonal *ijb*, signifying  
there

\* This participle serves other purposes. It is sometimes a verbal noun. Thus *meser* is not only *tradens*, but also *traditor*: *shofet* is both *judicans* and *judex*. *Shofetim*,  
the



*there is*, or *it is*, which always has the import of the present, and suits equally all persons, genders, and numbers. So that, though in Hebrew verbs there is, properly speaking, no present tense, yet there are in the language several contrivances that answer the same purpose. *Affirmation with respect to present time* is indeed so necessary in all nations, that we cannot well conceive how any language should be unprovided of the means of expressing it.

I. 2. Secondly, when I say, *Scribam*, \* *Grapsô*, *I shall write*, I utter a promise, in which future time is expressed indefinitely; for I do not allot the action of writing to any particular or definite part of time future. This, therefore, is an aorist of the future.—But when I say, *Scripturus sum*, † *mellô graphein*, *I am about to write*, or *I am going to write*, I express future time *definitely*, or without an aorist: for the meaning is, that I shall write immediately, or soon, after making the declaration. And this is, by most Grammarians, allowed to have been the import of that *paulo-post-futurum*, which is found in the passive verbs of the Greeks; where ‡ *tupsomai* signifies, indefinitely, or by the aorist, *I shall be beaten*; but || *tetupsomai*, the paulo-post-future, denotes, I shall be *immedi-*

ately plural of the latter, is the title of that book which we call *Judges*. The name is no doubt the same with that given by Latin authors to the chief magistrates of Carthage, Suffetes. See Liv. xxviii. 37. The Hebrew, the language of Canaan, as Isaiah calls it, and that of the Phenicians, of whom the Carthaginians were a colony, were originally the same, with perhaps some difference of dialect. But the Romans, like the Ephraimites, could not pronounce the letter *Schin*, and therefore turned it into S, adding, as was usual with them, a termination from their own language.—Sometimes in the New Testament we find the present participle active used in the same way. Thus *ὁ πειραζων* is *the tempter*, and *ὁ βαπτιζων* *the Baptist*.—*Benoni*, the name of the active present participle, signifies *intermediate*: and the participle is so called, perhaps, because it comes as it were between the two Hebrew tenses, the past and the future. It is spelled differently from the name *Benoni*, which Rachel when dying gave her newborn son, (Genes. xxxv. 18); though when expressed by Roman characters they appear the same.

\* γράψω.

† μέλλω γράψειν.

‡ τυψομαι.

|| τετυψομαι.

*ately* beaten, or I am about to be beaten. This, both in Latin and English, we express by means of an auxiliary word or two, *Sum scripturus, I am about to write*: of which it is remarkable, that the auxiliary verb *sum, I am*, points at present time; while the participle *scripturus, about to write*, implies future time; whence we gather, that this form of the verb signifies time future joined to time present, or, in other words, that the futurity spoken of is presently to commence.—The Hebrews have no paulo-post-future; but by joining to their future such adverbs as *quickly, immediately, soon, &c.* they easily express the meaning. The same thing may, I suppose, be done in all other languages. Consequently, the paulo-post-future is not a necessary tense.

As general maxims may be signified by the aorist of the present, so the aorist of the future is often used in legislative sentences:—Thou *shalt* not kill, Thou *shalt* not steal; in which it is obvious, that no particular period of future time is meant, but future time indefinitely, \* *aoristós*, or in general. It is thy duty, *at all times*, and on *all occasions*, to abstain from theft and from murder. Here again we see a co-incidence of the future with the present. By a change of the phrase, every precept of this sort may be referred to present time: *It is* thy duty not to kill; *It is* thy duty not to steal: or, *I command* thee not to kill; *I forbid* thee to steal, &c.—The Present, though it cannot be called a part of the Future, is however an introduction to it. But the Future and the Past are of no kindred; and, being separated by the Present, can never be contiguous.

I. 3. That there is an *aorist of the past*, is easily proved. The Greek verbs, and the English too, have a particular form to express it, without the aid of auxiliary words. † *Egrapsa, I wrote*, or

\* *Αοριστος.*† *Εγραψα.*

*I did write*, denotes, that the action of writing is *past*, but refers to no particular period of past time. When I say, “ He *sent* me a letter, and I *answered* it,” both *sent* and *answered* are aorists, and point at past time indefinitely: the letters spoken of may, for any thing that appears in the sentence, have been written and sent a year ago, or twenty years ago, or last summer, or last week, or yesterday; for the tenses refer to no one portion of past time more than another.—But if I say, “ He *sent* me a letter, and I *have answered* it,” the verb *he sent* is an aorist; but *I have answered* is not an aorist; for it points at past time more definitely, and means, that I answered it *just now*, or *lately*.—It is worth while to attend to this auxiliary verb, by which we express *definite past time*; *I have answered*; *I have*, being the present tense, points at time present; and *answered*, being the participle of the past, refers to time past: whence we infer, that the time expressed by these words, *I have answered*, is a mixture of the present with the past, or rather, *the past terminating in or near the present*. And that this is the true character of the tense in question, will appear more clearly by and by.

We see then, that verbs express not only Present, Past, and Future time; but also time past, present, and future, either, first, *indefinitely*, that is, by aorists, or, secondly, *definitely*.

But observe, that the English auxiliary *have* is not always definite, even when joined to the preterite participle. “ I *have heard* it said, I know not when, or by whom, that Charles the second on his death-bed declared himself a papist.” Here the words *I have heard*, are so far from being definite in regard to time, that they may allude to a fact which happened ten, twenty, thirty years ago, or not one year ago, or to a fact of which no body knows when it happened.

Observe,

Observe, further, that, in order to define or ascertain time exactly, the verb alone, even in the definite tenses, is not sufficient, but must be illustrated by adverbs, or other words significant of exact time. For our notions in regard to the extent of time vary according to the nature of the actions spoken of: and if these be important, or of long continuance, or not usual, we are apt to consider the time, which precedes or follows them, as short, because they make a strong impression, and appear of great magnitude. A year after one's house is finished, one may say, "I have finished my house:" but, "I have answered Alexander's letter," is understood to have a shorter retrospect; unless the writing of the letter was a work of great labour and time. In like manner, "I am to build a house," may be said a year before one begins to build; but, "I am to take a walk," expresses a very near futurity. And therefore, as the expression of time by verbs, especially of time past and future, is rather relative than absolute, adverbs, and other words, come to be necessary, when we would speak with precision of past and future time. "I am just going to take a walk; — I shall build a house *this summer*; — I have *this moment* finished my letter," &c.

II. The tenses of active verbs may be divided, secondly, *in respect of the mode of action* signified, into Perfect, which denote *complete action*, and Imperfect, which denote *incomplete action*.

A late author mentions another class of tenses, which he calls *Indefinite*, and of which he says, that they denote action, but without specifying, whether it be complete or incomplete. And, as an example, he gives the aorist of the past, \* *Eγραψα, I wrote*, or *I did write*. But I cannot see, that there is any ground for this division. No other grammarian, so far as I know, either antient or modern, has taken notice of it; while the distribution of tenses

\* Εγραψα.

into *perfect* and *imperfect* seems to be as old as grammar itself. And the learned Author, whom I allude to, affirms, that “in our grammatical inquiries we cannot quit the footsteps of the antients, without the greatest hazard of going wrong.” This novelty, however, I reject, not because it is new, but because I do not understand it. I can conceive a complete action, that is, an action, which has had, or is to have, a beginning and an end: I can also conceive an incomplete action, that has had a beginning, but which is not, or is not said to be, ended. But an action, which, though it must have had a beginning, is considered as neither ended nor continued, as neither complete nor incomplete, I cannot conceive at all. When I say, “I wrote a letter,” the *past time* is *indefinite*, but a *complete action* is plainly signified: if the letter had not been finished, “I was writing,” would have been the proper tense. In like manner, “I wrote,” though it does not imply, that the thing written, whether book or letter, was finished, (for no particular writing is specified) does yet signify, that the *act of writing* was both begun and ended. If it had not been *begun*, it could not be referred to past time; and if it had not been *ended*, or *discontinued*, (for these words applied to the simple act of writing are of the same import) it would have been still going on; and the affirmation concerning it would be to this purpose, “I have been writing all the morning, and am still writing.” — But, to return to the second general division of tenses, into *Perfect*, denoting *complete action*, and *Imperfect*, which denote *incomplete action*.

II. 1. The aorist of the present may be said to denote incomplete action. When I say, “A merry heart *maketh* a chearful countenance,” I express by the word *maketh* an action, or operation, which is always *a doing*, and never can be said to be *done* and *over*. For the time never yet was, since man was made, when gladness of heart did not display itself in the countenance, and,

while human nature remains unaltered, the time will never come when it shall cease to do so.

Further, the definite present, I mean the present that is definite in respect of time, does also denote incomplete action. While I am writing a letter, I say *Scribo, I write, or I am writing*; which implies, that part of the writing is done, and that part of it is not done; that the action is begun, but not ended.

But the moment the writing is completed, I say, or I may say, "I have written;" in which are comprehended these three things. First, that the action is *complete*; for which reason the tense is called *perfectum*, the perfect: a word, which, from the frequent use of it in our grammars, may suggest to us the idea of *past time*; but which in reality signifies *perfect* or *complete* action: for, that there is a *perfect* of the *future*, as well as of the *past*, will appear in the sequel. — Secondly, the words "I have written" imply, that the action is not only complete, but also *past*; for which reason, the tense is called *preteritum perfectum*, the complete past, or the preterite perfect, or more briefly the *preterperfect*. — Thirdly, these words imply, that the action is *just now* completed, or *very lately*. From this relation of the preterperfect to present time, (for, as I already observed, it denotes past time ending in the present, or near it,) the Stoicks, who were accurate grammarians, called it *the perfect or complete present*: but, as it denotes what *is done*, and, consequently, *what is not now a-doing*, I think it better to call it by its ordinary name, the preterperfect.

For this tense the Greeks have a particular form \* *gegrapha*; the English, and other moderns, express it by an auxiliary verb joined to the participle, *I have written*. But it is remarkable, that for this tense the Latin verb has no particular inflection; for the same Latin word denotes both the preterperfect and the aorist of the

\* γεγραφα.

past. *Scripti*, for example, signifies, not only *I wrote*, or *I did write*, (referring to past time indefinitely) but also, *I have written*, referring to an action past and lately completed. Hence arises a small ambiguity in the use of the Latin verb, from which the verbs of many other languages are free. But, by means of adverbs, and other auxiliary words that hang loosely upon the syntax of language, this ambiguity in the Latin tongue may be prevented, wherever it is likely to prove inconvenient.

And here we learn to correct an error in some of the common grammars; where *amavi* is translated *I have loved*; as if it were a true preterperfect, and nothing else, like the Greek \* *pephiléka*: whereas it is both a preterperfect, and an aorist of the past, answering both to *pephiléka*, and to † *epbilésa*; and should therefore be rendered, *I loved*, *I did love*, or *I have loved*. And children should be taught, that, though these three English phrases are here connected by the particle *or*, and are every one of them expressed by the Latin *amavi*, they are not of the same import; for that the last may sometimes differ considerably in signification from the other two.—One mistake leads to another. The imperfect *amabam* is in the common grammars rendered, *I loved or did love*; as if it were the aorist of the past, and the same with the Greek *epbilésa*: whereas, so far as it is really the *imperfect*, it corresponds to the Greek ‡ *epbiloun*, and, as will appear by and by, ought to have been translated *I was loving*. I do not however affirm, that it is *never* an aorist of the past. But, in good authors, that is not its common use; and when it is, the tense loses that character which entitles it to be called *imperfect*.

The Hebrews, having but one preterite, must confound, as the Latins do, the preterperfect with the aorist of the past, and make

\* περιληκα.

† ἐπιλησα.

‡ ἐπιλοῦν.

one word serve for both. When Job received the news of those accumulated calamities, which at once divested him of all his property, and of every domestick comfort, he rent his clothes, fell down upon the ground, and worshipped; and, according to our translation, said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away:” “blessed be the name of the Lord.” Here, (as the learned Author of *the origin and progress of Language* observes) the two preterites are elegantly distinguished; the first being the aorist, the other the preterperfect. “The Lord *gave*;” this happened formerly, but at what period of past time is not said:—and, “the Lord *hath taken away*;” this had just happened, or very lately, so that it might be said to be felt at the present moment. In the Hebrew, the tense is in both clauses the same: and the passage literally translated would be, “The Lord gave, and the Lord took away,” or perhaps, “The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away.” Job’s meaning may, no doubt, be understood from these expressions; but seems to be more emphatically signified in our English bible, than by either of them, or even by the original Hebrew itself.—The preterperfect, therefore, as distinguished from the aorist preterite, is rather an useful, than a necessary, tense. In Latin, by means of an adverb of present time joined to the preterite, its full import might in many cases be given; though not so elegantly, perhaps, as in Greek or English. *Jehova dedit; et nunc abstulit Jehova: sit nomen Jehovæ benedictum.*

The Latins, as Mr. Harris and other learned authors have observed, sometimes use their perfect tense, to denote the annihilation or discontinuance of the attribute expressed by the verb: *fuit*, for example, to signify *he has been, he is no more*; *vixit*, *he has lived, he is dead*; and, at the conclusion of Academical harangues, *dixi, I have done speaking, I am silent.* In this view, the verbs *fuit, vixit, and dixi* are to be considered as *preterperfect*; that is, as expressing



an attribute connected with *that definite past time which terminates in or near the present*.—Thus, when Cicero had, by virtue of a sort of dictatorial authority conferred on him by the Senate for a temporary purpose, put to death some noblemen of Rome, who had been concerned in Catiline's conspiracy, he appeared in the forum, and, in the hearing of all the people, who were anxious to know the event, cried out with a loud voice, "*Vixerunt,*" they *have lived*; that is, *they are dead*; "their life continued down to this time has "just now terminated." Perhaps Cicero might have a scruple to use a more explicit term; *death* being one of those words that the Romans thought it ominous to pronounce on certain occasions. Or perhaps, though what he had done was constitutional, and of great public utility, yet, being extraordinary, and in a popular state somewhat hazardous at such a time, he might wish to mitigate the general opinion of its severity, by announcing it in such a manner, as should fix the attention of the people rather upon the *lives* and *crimes* of the conspirators, than upon their punishment.

Virgil has introduced the same idiom, with the happiest effect, in one or two passages of the *Eneid*. On the night of the destruction of Troy, Eneas, warned in a dream that the city was betrayed and on fire, starts from his bed, and, alarmed by the uproar of the battle, and the glare of the conflagration, rushes out in arms to attack the enemy. In his way he meets Panthus the priest of Apollo. What is the state of our affairs, Panthus, said he; what is to be done? Panthus with a groan replied,

Venit summa dies, et inductabile tempus  
Dardaniæ: *fui*mus Troes, *fuit* Ilium, et ingens  
Gloria Teucrorum.

"Our last hour is come: Troy *has been*: we *have been* Trojans." As if he had said, "Trojans, and their city, and all their glory, are

“ to be reckoned among the things that *have been*, but are now no  
 “ more.”—The same poet, speaking of Ardea, an antient Rutilian  
 town, has these words,

—— et nunc magnum manet Ardea nomen,  
 Sed fortuna *fuit*.

“ Ardea is still a great name; but its fortune *has been*, or is over  
 “ and gone.” Rueus, indeed, the learned editor of Virgil for the  
 use of the Dauphin, explains the word otherwise, and makes it  
 signify, that “ fortune had so determined:” and in this he is coun-  
 tenanced by Scaliger. But the interpretation here given is more  
 suitable to the context, as well as to the solemn phraseology of the  
 poet; and is, besides, warranted by Taubmannus and Mr. Harris.

I said, that the nature of the tense we now speak of is more fully  
 expressed by the common appellation of *preterperfect*, than by that  
 of the *perfect present*, which is the name the Stoicks gave it. And  
 so indeed it is for the most part. But I ought to have added,  
 that this tense in Greek does sometimes imply, not past time ter-  
 minating in or near the present, nor even complete action, but  
*past and present time united*; in which case it becomes a sort of  
 present, and, in Doctor Clarke’s opinion, should be called, not  
 the preterperfect, but the *present perfect*: as in the following line  
 of Homer:

\* Kluthi meu, Argurotox’, hos Chrusên amphibebêkas;  
 “ Hear me, O God of the silver bow, who *hast been and art* the  
 “ guardian of Chryse.”

Mr. Harris seems to think, that, in Virgil, the preterperfect  
 often implies the same sort of time with the present. That this is  
 never the case, I will not affirm. But, if I mistake not, most of  
 the passages he has quoted will be found to have a more expressive

\* Κλυθι μευ Αργυροτοξ’ ἰς χρυσην ἀμφιβεβηκας. Iliad. i.

meaning; if we suppose the tense in question to signify *past* time. For example,

—— Si brachia forte *remisit*,

Atque illum in præceps prono *rapit* alveus amni. \*

I would render thus: “If he who rows against the stream *has inter-*—  
“ *mited* for a moment the exertion of his arms, headlong *he is*  
“ instantly born by the current of the river.” For *atque* is here  
used in the antique sense, and denotes *immediately*; as in that line  
of Ennius,

Atque atque ad muros properat Romana juvenus.

—So in the description of the night-storm of thunder, lightning,  
and rain,

Terra *tremit*, *fugere* feræ— †

“The earth is trembling”—you feel it, and therefore that com-  
motion is *present*: but, when you look around you, *fugere feræ*,  
you find that the wild beasts have disappeared, and therefore *had*  
 *fled* away, before you lifted up your eyes.—Again, when the  
poet says,

—— tardis ingens ubi flexibus *errat*

Mincius, et tenera *prætexit* arundine ripas: ‡

“The great Mincius *rolls* slowly winding along, and *fringes* (or  
“ *borders*) his banks with reeds;” I agree with Mr. Harris, that  
the two verbs are the same in respect of time; but I do not find,  
that the tenses are different. The learned author probably mistook  
the present of *prætexo* for the preterit of *prætēgo*: which last is a  
word that Virgil never uses, and which I cannot recollect to have  
seen in any *Classick* of the Augustan age.

Once more, when Virgil says, of a ship,

—— illa noto citius, celerique sagitta;

Ad terram *fugit*, et portu se *condidit* alto. ||

\* Georg. ii. ver. 202. † Georg. i. ver. 330. ‡ Georg. iii. ver. 15. || Æneid. v.  
“ Swifter

“Swifter than the wind, or an arrow, she *flies* to land;”—this is present; “and now,” before I can speak the word, “she *has run* into the harbour.” There is in this example the same diversity of time, as if I were to say: “See how swiftly the boy pursues the butterfly; he *runs*—and now he *has caught* it.”—But of this, enough.

II. 2. The tenses of past time denote two sorts of actions; first, actions *complete* or *perfect*, and secondly, actions *incomplete* or *imperfect*.

First, I say, the tenses of past time denote complete actions. Of this kind, for the most part, is the preterperfect above described, which expresses past time as ending in the present, or near it.—Of this kind, also, is the aorist of the past \**εγραψα*, *I wrote*, or *I did write*; as already observed.

And of the same kind is the tense called *Plusquamperfectum*; which denotes complete action connected, not with present, but with past time. That this is its import, will appear from an example. “He came to forbid me to write, but I *had written* before he came.” Here observe, that the words *I had written* refer, first, to a complete action; secondly, to past time; and, thirdly, to an action that was prior in time to another action which is also past. This is the peculiar meaning of the plusquamperfect: so that in three respects it resembles the preterperfect, namely, in denoting *complete action*, *past time*, and *past time definite*; but from the preterperfect it differs in this one respect, that the time expressed by it terminates not in time present, but at some point of the time that is past. And the double reference which it bears to past time appears in our complex way of expressing it, *I had written*; in which it is observable, that the auxiliary *had* and the participle *written* are both significant of past time. The Greeks and

\* *εγραψα*.

Latins elegantly express this tense by one word, which is derived immediately from the preterperfect, to which indeed it bears a nearer affinity than to any other tense: *scripsi, scripsiram*; \* *gegrapha, egegraphain*. — So much for those tenses of past time, which denote *complete action*.

Secondly, there is also a preterite tense, which denotes *incomplete action*: *Scribebam, I was writing*. In this expression it is implied, that the action is *past*, that it *continued*, or might have continued for some time, but that it was *not finished*. The tense therefore is very properly called the *imperfect preterite*. The Greeks gave it a name signifying † *extended*; and described it more particularly, by saying, that “it is the extended and incomplete part of the past.” — Eneas, in Virgil, speaking of the destruction of Troy, relates, that, after he had conducted his father and followers to a place of safety, he returned alone to the burning city, in quest of his wife Creusa, who was missing. He went first to his own house, thinking, she might have wandered thither: but there, he says,

— *Irruerant Danai, et tectum omne tenebant*;

“the Greeks *had rushed* in, and *were possessing* the whole house.” Observe the effect of the plusquamperfect, and imperfect, tenses. The Greeks *had rushed* in, *irruerant*; that action *was over*, and had been completed *before he came*: but the act of possessing the house, *tenebant*, was *not over*, nor *finished*, but *still continuing*. This example is taken notice of by Mr. Harris. I shall give another from Virgil, and one from Ovid.

In the account of the paintings, which Eneas is surpris'd to find in the temple of Juno at Carthage, they being all, it seems, on the subject of the Trojan war, the poet mentions the following circumstance,

\* γεγραφα, εγεγραφειν.

† παρατατικος.

Ter circum Iliacos *raptaverat* Hæctora muros,  
Exanimumque auro corpus *vendebat* Achilles :

which informs us both of the action of the picture, and of the event that was supposed to have preceded it. “ Achilles *had dragged* the body of Hæctor three times round the walls of “ Troy ;” — this is the previous event ; — “ and *was selling*,” that is, was represented in the act of delivering, “ the body to Priam, “ and receiving the ransom.” All this is easily conceived ; and an excellent subject it is for a picture. But if, without distinguishing the tenses, we were to understand the passage, as Dryden has translated it,

Thrice round the walls of Troy Achilles drew  
The corpse of Hæctor, whom in fight he slew, &c.

we should be inclined to think, that Virgil knew very little of the laws, or of the powers, of painting. For, according to this interpretation, Achilles must have been painted in the act of *dragging Hæctor three times* round Troy, and also in the act of delivering the body to Priam. Pitt, Trapp, and Ogilvie, in their Translations, have fallen into the same impropriety ; a proof, that the theory of tenses has not always been attended to, even by men of learning.

When Dido had just struck the fatal blow, and lay in the agonies of death, the behaviour of her Sister, as described by Dryden, is somewhat extraordinary. Anna was at a little distance from the pile, on which lay the unfortunate queen : but, hearing of what had happened, she ran in distraction to the place, and addressed Dido in a long speech. That being ended,

— She mounts the pile with eager haste,  
And in her arms the dying queen embraced ;

Her

Her *temples chafed*, and *her own garments* tore,\*  
To stanch the streaming blood, and cleanse the gore.

The speech is very fine, and very pathetick; in Virgil, at least, it is so: but, as it appears in Dryden, (and Pitt commits the same mistake) never was any thing of the kind more unseasonable. The poor lady was dying, the blood streaming from her wound; and yet this affectionate sister (for such we know she was) would not attempt any thing for her relief, till she had declaimed for fourteen lines together. — But, from Virgil's own account we learn, that Anna did not lose a moment. She *had mounted* the lofty pile, and *was holding* her dying sister to her bosom, and weeping, and *endeavouring* to stop the effusion of blood, all the while that those passionate exclamations were breaking from her.

— Sic fata, gradus *evaserat* altos  
Semianimemque sinu germanam amplexa *fovebat*  
Cum gemitu, atque atros *siccabat* veste cruores.

This the English poet would have known, if he had not confounded the imperfect tense with the perfect and plusquamperfect, and supposed them all to mark the same sort of time and of action. Similar blunders are frequent in Dryden, and in all the other translators of Virgil that I have seen.

In Ovid, when the Flood was abated, Deucalion, having concluded a very tender speech to Pyrrha with this sentiment, “ It  
“ has pleased the Gods, that we are the only survivors of the whole  
“ human race;” the poet adds,

*Dixerat*; et *stebant*: placuit celeste precari  
Numen. —

\* Considering Dido's condition, to *chafe her temples* was absurd, if not cruel: and to insinuate, that Anna on this occasion did not spare *her own clothes*, is ridiculously trifling. Virgil says not a word of chafing temples, or of tearing garments.

“ He *had done speaking*; and they *were weeping*; when it occurred to them to implore the aid of the Goddess of the place.” The speech had been for some time concluded; then followed a pause, during which they wept in silence; and, while they were weeping, they formed this pious resolution. The plusquamperfect, followed by the imperfect, is here very emphatical, and gives in two words an exact view of the behaviour of this forlorn pair; which would be in a great measure lost, if, confounding the tenses in English, we were to translate it, as is vulgarly done; “ He spoke, and they wept:” which marks neither the continuance of the last action, nor that it was subsequent to the first. — If children are not well instructed in the nature of the several tenses, it is impossible for them to enter into the delicacies of classical expression.

The Latins elegantly use this imperfect tense to signify actions that are customary, and often repeated. Thus *dicebat* may imply, *he was saying*, or *he was wont to say*; the same with *solebat dicere*. For actions that have become habitual, or which are frequently repeated, may be said to be always going on, and may therefore with philosophick propriety be expressed by the imperfect tense.

It also deserves notice, that the antient painters and statuaries, both Greek and Latin, made use of this tense, when they put their names to their performances. On a famous statue of Hercules still extant are inscribed these words, \* *Glycôn Athênaios epoiei*, Glycon Atheniensis *faciebat*, Glycon an Athenian *was making* it. The phrase was thought modest; because it implied, that the artist had indeed been at work upon the statue, but did not pretend to say that he had finished it, or made it complete: which would have been the meaning, if he had given it in the aorist † *epoiese*, *fecit*,

\* Γλυκων Αθηναιος ἐποιεῖ.

† ἐποίησε.



*made* it. Some of our printers have adopted the same tense at the beginning or end of their books; “*Excudebat* Henricus Stephanus: *Excudebant* Robertus et Andreas Foulis.”

Cesar, whose narrative is not less distinguished by its modesty, than his actions were by their greatness, often uses the imperfect, in speaking of himself, where I think he would have used the perfect, if he had been speaking of another. This must have been wonderfully pleasing to a Roman; who would be much more sensible of the delicacy, than we are. Indeed, the best antient and modern criticks, particularly Cicero, Quintilian, and Roger Ascham, speak with a sort of rapture of the exquisite propriety of Cesar’s style. And as to his narrative, though he pretended to nothing more, than to write a journal or diary, (for such is the meaning of the word, which is vulgarly translated *Commentaries*) — as to his narrative, I say, Cicero declares, that no man in his senses will ever attempt to improve it. The frequency of these imperfects in Cesar has, if I mistake not, another use: for it keeps the reader continually in mind, that the book was written from day to day, *in the midst* of business, and while the transactions there recorded might be said rather *to be going on*, than to be completed.

From the few examples here given it will appear, that the Imperfect and Plusquamperfect are very useful, and may be the source of much elegant expression; and that, if one were not taught to distinguish, in respect of meaning as well as of form, these tenses from each other, and the preterit from both, one could not pretend to understand, far less to translate, any good Classick author. The want of them, therefore, in Hebrew, must be a deficiency. Yet, in a language, like the Hebrew, which has been employed chiefly in delivering sentiments and recording facts, in the simplest manner, with little rhetorical art, and without any ostentation of harmonious and elaborate periods, this is not perhaps so material a deficiency, as at first sight it may appear.

For first, if we are willing to dispense with elegance and energy, the preterit may often be used for the plusquamperfect. If I say, "He came to forbid me to write, but *I wrote* before he came," (instead of *I had written*), the meaning is perceptible enough; though not so grammatically expressed as it might have been, nor indeed so strongly. In the translation of the fourteenth chapter of St. Matthew, we have these words: "And Herod said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. For Herod *had laid hold* on John, and bound him, and put him in prison, &c." Here the plusquamperfect *had laid hold and bound* is elegantly used. But the Greek, following, as in many other parts of the Gospels, (especially of Matthew's Gospel) the Hebrew idiom, has the aorist of the preterit: "For Herod, having laid hold on John, *bound* him, and *put* him in prison." This gives the sense; though not so emphatically, as it is expressed in the English Bible. \*

Secondly: The preterit *may* be used, without ambiguity, for the imperfect. This change might often be made in Cæsar, as already hinted. The French *j'étois* and *je fus* are both rendered in English *I was*. And, instead of *Stephanus excudebat*, at the bottom of a title-page, if we were to read *Stephanus excudit*, the phrase, though less classical, would be equally intelligible. So liable, indeed, are these two tenses to be confounded, that in some Latin grammars (as formerly observed) we find *I loved or did love* given as the interpretation of *amabam*.

Thirdly: The Hebrews do sometimes give the full sense of the plusquamperfect, by prefixing, to the infinitive of the verb, or to a sort of verbal noun called a gerund, the word *calab*, *be finished*,

\* Other examples of the preterit used for the plusquamperfect, see in Luke xix. 15. John v. 13. Apocalyps. xxi. 1.

or *he made an end of*. “As soon as Isaac made an end of blessing “Jacob”—might, according to the syntax of those languages that have a plusquamperfect, be thus rendered without any impropriety, “As soon as Isaac *had blessed* Jacob.” \*—A similar idiom we have in English; as when, instead of *dixerat*, we say, *he had done speaking*, or *he had ceased to speak*.

III. 1. It remains now to show, that the tenses expressive of *future* time may also denote, first *Incomplete* actions, and secondly *Complete* actions.

First, *Scribam*, *I shall write*, denotes incomplete action: for it does not say, whether I am to write for a long or for a short time, or whether I am to finish what I begin. This part of the verb, therefore, to which the Greek † *γραφῶ* corresponds, is an *imperfect future*; and is also, (as was formerly shown) an aorist of the future. In our way of expressing it, by the auxiliaries *shall* and *will*, its character appears manifest. *Shall* or *will* refers to *future time* indefinitely; and *write* refers to an action, which is indeed to begin, but of whose completion nothing is said.

In like manner, *Scripturus sum*, *I am about to write*, though definite in regard to time, because it implies, that the action is immediately to commence, is yet as much an *imperfect* as the other future, because it says nothing of the finishing or completing of the action.

But, secondly, *Scripsero*, *I shall have written*, or *I shall have done writing*, is a *perfect future*, and denotes complete action. And our complex way of putting it in English does fully express its character; *I shall have written*: for *shall* denotes future time, *written* implies past action; and *have written* signifies *complete action*, with *past time terminating in the present*. So that the whole meaning,

\* Genes. xxvii. 30. See also Numb. xvi. 31.

† γεῖψω.

is, that “ when a certain time now future comes to be present, a  
 “ certain action will then, and just then, be finished.”—This tense  
 the Greek tongue, for all its copiousness, cannot express in one  
 word. \* *Efomai gegraphós* is the phrase for it; *efomai* the future  
 of † *eimi* *I am*, and *gegraphós* the preterperfect participle; “ I shall  
 “ be in the condition of having written.” The Latin grammarians  
 call it *the future of the subjunctive mood*; for which they are severely  
 blamed by Dr. Clarke, in his notes upon Homer; who contends,  
 and I think with reason, that it is as really *indicative*, as *Scribam*,  
 and *Scriptus ero*. The learned Doctor calls it the *perfect future*.  
 Vossius gives it the same name; which Ruddiman ‡ approves of:  
 and Mr. Harris, and the Author of a Treatise, *On the origin and*  
*progress of language*, describe it under the same character.—In He-  
 brew, the full import of this tense is given by joining the future  
 of *calab* (he made an end of) to the infinitive or gerund of another  
 verb. Thus, “ And it shall be, when the officers *have made an*  
 “ *end of speaking* unto the people, that they shall make captains of  
 “ the armies to lead the people,”—would have been equally just in  
 respect of sense, and better suited to the conciseness of the original,  
 if it had been rendered, “ And it shall be, when the officers *shall*  
*have spoken* unto the people,” &c. §

IV. There is yet another light, in which the tenses may be  
 considered. Some of them, as we have seen, unite two times  
 (as it were) in one; others express one time only. The former  
 may be called *Compound tenses*; the latter *Simple*.

1. Of the Compound Tenses, one is the preterperfect || *gegrapha*;  
 which unites the past with the present; as particularly appears in our  
 way of expressing it, with an auxiliary of the present, *I have*, and a  
 participle of the past, *written*; I have written.

\* εφομαι γεγραφως.

† εϊμι.

‡ Rudiments of the Latin tongue, page 43.

§ Deuteron. xx. 9.

|| γεγραφα.

Another is the plusquamperfect, *Scripteram*, which unites *the past with the past*, by intimating, that a certain past action was completed before another action which is also past. The union of these two past times is also signified by us, when we join the preterite of the auxiliary *had* with the preterite of the participle *written*; I had written.

A third compound tense is the future of complete action, or the perfect future *Scriptero*, I shall have written, \* *Esomai gegraphós*; which, as appears by the English and Greek way of expressing it, forms an *union* of the preterperfect, that is, *of the complete past ending in the present*, with the *future*. Of this tense it is remarkable, that in the English (as in the Greek) way of expressing it, *I shall have written*, or, *I shall have done writing*; there is no auxiliary of the subjunctive mood: a circumstance, that sufficiently shows the absurdity of calling it *the future of the subjunctive*.

A fourth is the definite future, *Scripturus sum*, I am going to write, or, I am about to write: in which the present is united with the future, *Sum* with *Scripturus*, to intimate a futurity that is just commencing. We express it in English by a sort of figure: I am *going* to write; that is, I am engaged in an action which is preparatory to, or will be immediately followed by, the act of writing. The other English phrase is, I am *about* to write; that is, I am at the *point*, the *nearer end*, or *the beginning* of the action of writing: for *bout* in French denotes *point* or *end*; and *au bout*, at the point, or at the end; so that it is probable we have derived this idiom from the French language.

A fifth compound tense is in Latin *Scripturus eram*; in Greek † *Emellon graphein*; in English, I *was about* to write. We use

\* εσομαι γεγραφος.

† εμελλον γραφειν.

it, to express an action, which at a certain time now past would have taken place immediately, if something had not happened to prevent or defer it, or at least to claim a prior attention. So in the tenth chapter of the Apocalypse; “And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write, *Emellon graphein*: “and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.” It is therefore a composition of the past *eram*, with the definite or paulo-post future, *Scripturus*. But there is not in any language, so far as I know, a contrivance for comprehending all this in *one word*; and therefore, like some other tenses, it must be signified by auxiliary words joined to the participle of future time.

*I shall be writing*, \* *Efomai graphôn*, is the last compound tense that I shall mention. It occurs in sentences like the following, “I cannot come tomorrow before dinner, for *I shall be writing* all the morning;” and is therefore a coalition of the *future* with the *imperfect*. It differs however from the incomplete future formerly described, and exemplified by *Scribam*, I shall write. This last denotes incomplete action, and indefinite (or aoristical) futurity: but *I shall be writing* denotes *both these*, together with *extended or continued action*. — So much for *compound tenses*; which unite two or more times in one. — If the reader will not allow these two last forms of expression to be Tenses, I shall not insist on it, that they are. I call them so, because they have been so called by others.

2. The *simple tenses*, expressive of *one time only*, are these that follow. — 1. The definite present, *Scribo*, I write. — 2. The aorist of the present, “A merry heart *maketh* a chearful countenance.” — 3. The aorist of the past, † *Egraphsa*, I wrote, or I did write. —

\* εἶσομαι γραφῶν.

† εγραψα.

4. The aorist of the future, *Scribam, I shall write.* — 5. The imperfect, or the continued and incomplete past, *Scribebam, I was writing.* — These tenses have all been sufficiently described under other characters.

And now, of the ELEVEN TENSES here explained, which, being a strange as well as an odd number, we may, by omitting the two last, and retaining the Paulo-post-future (because there is a tense of that name in the Greek Grammar) reduce to NINE, the number of the Muses; — of these eleven tenses, I say, the arrangement and general nature may be seen at one glance, in the following Table.

### TENSES OF ACTIVE VERBS.

#### DEFINITE IN TIME.

The *Present*. *Scribo. I write.* Number 1.

The *Preterperfect*. *I have written.* Numb. 2.

The *Paulo-post-future*. *Scripturus sum.* Numb. 3.

#### INDEFINITE IN TIME, OR AORIST.

The *Present*. *A merry heart maketh, &c.* Numb. 4.

The *Past*. *Egrapsa. I wrote, or I did write.* Numb. 5.

The *Future*. *Scribam. I shall write.* Numb. 6.

#### COMPLETE IN RESPECT OF ACTION.

The *Preterperfect*. *I have written.* Numb. 2.

The *Aorist of the past*. *I wrote.* Numb. 5.

The *Plusquamperfect*. *I had written.* Numb. 7.

The *Future perfect*. *Scripsero. I shall have written.* Numb. 8.

#### INCOMPLETE IN RESPECT OF ACTION.

The *Imperfect and continued past*. *I was writing.* Numb. 9.

The *Aorist of the future*. *Scribam. I shall write.* Numb. 6.

The *Paulo-post-future*. *Scripturus sum.* Numb. 3.

COMPOUND, AS UNITING TWO OR MORE TIMES IN ONE TENSE.

- The *Preterperfect*. Past with present. Number 2.  
 The *Plusquamperfect*. Past with past. Numb. 7.  
 The *Future perfect*. Present and past with future. Numb. 8.  
 The *Paulo-post-future*. Present with future. Numb. 3.  
 The *Past with future*. *Scripturus eram*. Numb. 10.  
 The *Imperfect with future*. *I shall be writing*. Numb. 11.

SIMPLE, EXPRESSIVE OF ONE TIME.

- The *Definite present*. Numb. 1.  
 The *Aorist of the present*. Numb. 4.  
 The *Aorist of the past*. Numb. 5.  
 The *Aorist of the future*. Numb. 6.  
 The *Imperfect and extended past*. Numb. 9.

The Tenses, reduced to Nine, are, 1. The *Indefinite Present*.  
 2. The *Definite Present*. 3. The *Imperfect*. 4. The *Indefinite Preterit*, or *Aorist of the Past*. 5. The *Preterperfect*. 6. The *Plusquamperfect*. 7. The *Indefinite or Aorist Future*. 8. The *Paulo-post-future*. 9. The *Perfect Future*.

It will perhaps occur, that there are two Greek tenses, whereof in this long detail I have given no account; namely, the *second aorist*, and the *second future*. The truth is, that I consider them as unnecessary. Their place, for any thing I know to the contrary, might at all times be supplied by the first aorist and the first future. Some grammarians are of opinion, that the first aorist signifies time past in general, and the second, indefinite time past; and that the first future denotes a nearer, and the second a more remote futurity. But this, I apprehend, is mere conjecture, unsupported by proof. And therefore I incline rather to the sentiments of those who teach, that the second future and second aorist have no meaning different from the first future and first aorist; and that



they are the present and imperfect of some obsolete theme of the verb, and, when the other theme came into use, happened to be retained, for the sake of variety perhaps, or by mere accident, with a preterite and future signification. Be this as it will; as these tenses are peculiar to the Greek, and have nothing corresponding to them in other tongues, we need not scruple to overlook them as superfluous.

Different nations may make use of different contrivances for marking the times of their verbs. The Greeks and Latins distinguish their tenses, as well as their moods, and the cases of their nouns, adjectives, and participles, by varying the termination, or otherwise changing the form, of the word; retaining, however, those radical letters, which prove the inflection to be of the same kindred with its theme. The modern tongues, particularly the English, abound in auxiliary words, which vary the meaning of the noun or attributive, without requiring any considerable varieties of inflection. Thus, *I did read, I shall read, I should read*, have the same import with *legi, legam, legerem*. It is obvious, that a language, like the Greek and Latin, which can thus comprehend in one word the meaning of two or three, must have some advantages over those which cannot. Perhaps indeed it may not be more perspicuous: but, in the arrangement of words, and consequently in harmony and energy, as well as in conciseness, it may be much more elegant. Every sentiment that Greek or Latin can express may in one way or other be expressed in English. But if we were to attempt the same varieties of arrangement, we should see a wonderful superiority in the former. Virgil could say,

Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas :

But we cannot say, "Fair to resound thou teachest Amaryllis the  
" woods." Had the poet's verse permitted, the syntax of his lan-

guage would not have hindered him from changing the order of these five words in many different ways, with equal significance. But when we attempt more than two or three modes of arrangement, we are apt to fall into ambiguity or nonsense. Nay in many cases we are limited to one particular arrangement. A Roman might have said, *Achilles interfecit Heclorem*, or *Heclorem interfecit Achilles*, or *Achilles Heclorem interfecit*, or *Heclorem Achilles interfecit*; or *Interfecit Heclorem Achilles*, or *Interfecit Achilles Heclorem*: but we must say, *Achilles slew Heclo*; for, if we vary the sentence ever so little, we produce ambiguity, nonsense, or falsehood; ambiguity, as *Achilles Heclo slew*; nonsense, as *Slew Heclo Achilles*; falsehood, as *Heclo slew Achilles*.

It has been observed of the English, that they are much inclined to shorten their words into monosyllables; which a certain author wittily assigns as a proof, that taciturnity is natural to the people. It may also be remarked, that we are not friendly to inflection: for, few as the terminations of our verbs are, we seem inclinable to reduce their number. Thus some authors confound *wrote* with *written*, or rather abolish *written*, and use *wrote* instead of it; and say, not only, "he *wrote* a book," which is right; but also, "the book is well *wrote*," instead of "well *written*." To mistake the aorist of the past for the preterite participle, would have a strange effect in Latin or Greek; and is not less ungrammatical in English.—In like manner, some of our writers seem to forget, that English verbs have in the indicative mood a second person singular; for they say, *thou writes*, instead of *thou writest*: which is as improper in our language, as *tu scripsit* would be in Latin. And, both in speech and in writing, it has been too customary, of late years, to discontinue the use of that conjunctive or subjunctive mood, which was formerly, by our best writers, introduced after  
such

such words as *if, though, before, whether, unless, &c.*: as, “ If he *write*, I will answer him,”—“ Though he *slay* me, I will trust in him,”—“ I expect to see him before he *go* away,” &c. instead of which phrases, many people would now say, less properly, “ if he *writes*—though he *slays*—before he *goes*,” &c.\*—This however is the more excusable, because the indicative may sometimes be elegantly used in such a connection: as, “ If there *is* a Power above us, he must delight in virtue.” For the first clause, though introduced by *if*, is not meant to express what is in any degree doubtful, indefinite, or dependent: and therefore, it has not that character, which distinguishes the subjunctive from the indicative.—As our language has too little inflection, it is pity it should lose any of the little it has.

Past time being prior to present, and present to future, one would think, that grammarians, in arranging the tenses, should have given the first place to the preterites. Yet in the Greek and Latin, and all modern grammars, the order is different, and the present has the precedency: which by Scaliger is thus whimsically accounted for. What stands connected with present time is perceived by sense alone, and may therefore be known in some degree to all animals; but memory, as well as sense, is requisite to give information of what is past; and, in order to anticipate the future, sense, memory, and reason are all necessary.—The true reason I take to be this. The Present is put first, because in Greek and Latin it is considered as the theme or root of the verb; every other tense being derived from it, and it derived from no other tense: and the Preterites take place of the Future, in Latin, on account of the natural precedency of past to future time; and, in Greek, the

\* This, and the preceding, and some other grammatical and verbal improprieties, are frequent in Sterne.

Future takes place of the Preterits, because from the Future the Preterits are derived.

Having finished the subject of Tenses, I proceed to explain the nature of *Moods*, and to inquire, in what respects they are essential to language.

#### S E C T. IV.

*The subject continued. — Of the Modes, or Moods of verbs. — Gerunds and Supines. — Species of verbs.*

**I**N speaking, we not only convey our thoughts to others; but also give intimation of those peculiar affections, or mental energies, by which we are determined to think and speak. Hence the origin of *Modes* or *Moods* in verbs. They are supposed to make known our ideas, with something also of the intention, or temper of mind, with which we conceive and utter them.

In most languages, the use of moods is a matter of some difficulty; and the source of much elegance, in marking with a significant brevity certain minute varieties of meaning, which without this expedient would produce awkward circumlocutions. This will appear from some of the following examples. And the advantages here hinted at are more conspicuous in Greek and Latin, than in English. For in those languages the moods are marked by particular inflections of the verb; and the rules for their use are ascertained more exactly than in our tongue, and better adapted to the varieties of human thought.

As

As the theory of moods is not altogether the same in any two languages, one cannot enter into it with any great degree of minuteness, in an inquiry into the principles of Universal Grammar. All therefore I have to do in this place, is to give some account of their general nature, and show in what respects they may be essential to language.

If I affirm concerning that which I conceive absolutely to be present, or past, or future, I use what is called the *Indicative* or *Declarative* mood: as *I go, I was going, I had gone, I went, I shall go*. In all history and science this mood predominates; and in every language it is necessary. It is the business of the historian to say, not what Cæsar *might have done*, or what he *might have been*, but what he *was*, and what he *did*: the truths of geometry are invariable, and therefore absolute: and the philosopher considers the works of nature as they *are, have been, and will be*, and not as they *might have been* under the influence of different laws.

If, together with the simple affirmation of the verb, I also express some modification or affection of it, such as power, possibility, liberty, will, duty, &c. the mood is called *Potential*: as *I may write, I might have been consulted, I could live on vegetables, I would speak if I durst, He should have acted otherwise*.

If I signify, by means of a verb, something which is affirmed, not absolutely by itself, but relatively to some other verb on which it is dependent, I use the *Subjunctive* mood: as, *I eat, that I may live; if he go, I will follow; whether he be alive, I know not*. This has also been called the *Conjunctive* mood; perhaps because the verb so modified is often ushered in by a conjunction, *that, if, whether, &c.*

The *Optative* mood is said to express a wish or desire; and in Greek is marked by a particular form or inflection of the verb. Yet, even in Greek, a wish may be expressed by other moods besides the optative;

optative; and, without the aid of one or more auxiliary words, cannot be expressed even by the optative itself. Whence it may be inferred, that this mood is superfluous, even in Greek; and, as it is found in no other tongue, that it cannot be essential to language. In fact, the Greek optative often conveys the meaning of a Subjunctive, or Potential. By the Attick writers it is sometimes used to express those contingencies that depend on the human will.\*— In Latin, there is no need of an Optative; wishes being signified by the Subjunctive modified by certain auxiliaries expressed or understood: as *Utinam sapires* (that is, *Opto ut, uti, or utinam sapires*) “ I wish that you were wise:” *O si Jupiter referat præteritos annos* (that is, *O quantum gauderem, or O quantum proficeret, si Jupiter, &c.*) “ O that Jupiter, (or I wish that Jupiter) would restore the “ years that are past:” *Sis bonus felixque tuis*; where *utinam* is understood, or *Precor ut sis bonus, &c.* Similar contrivances take place in other tongues.

As to the Potential mood, it may, I think, in all cases, be resolved into either the Indicative or the Subjunctive: and therefore, and because in Latin and Greek it is not marked by any peculiar inflection of the verb, I do not consider it as essential to language, or as worthy of being distinguished in Grammar by a particular name. “ I may go,” is the same with “ It is in my power to go;” which is a positive and absolute affirmation, requiring a verb of the indicative mood. “ He should have gone,” appears to be equally absolute, when resolved thus, “ It was his duty to go.” And in like manner, “ He would have gone,” is nothing more than, “ He “ was willing to go.” And “ I might have been consulted,” is not materially different from, “ It was in the power of others to have “ consulted me.” In these examples, the Potential coincides with the Indicative.—And in the following passage from Horace,

\* Origin and Progress of Language.

Sed tacitus pasci si posset corvus, *haberet*

Plus dapis —

the last clause, which is commonly referred to the Potential, may be resolved into the indicative and subjunctive thus : *Si corvus posset pasci tacitus, ita res est, or fieri potest, ut haberet plus dapis* ; which is a sentence consisting of one absolute affirmation, or indicative verb, and of two subordinate or relative clauses, in both which the mood is subjunctive.

The Imperative Mood seems to be only an elliptical way of expressing that, which implies absolute affirmation, and which therefore might be with equal clearness, though not with equal brevity, expressed by the Indicative. “ Go thou,” is the same in meaning with, “ I command, or I intreat thee to go :” “ *Spare us, good Lord,*” may be resolved into, “ *We beseech thee, good Lord, to spare us.*”

The Infinitive may be called, if you please, *the infinitive, indefinite, or impersonal form of the verb* : but a mood it certainly is not ; because it implies no mental energy, or intention. Nay, if the essential character of the verb be, what it has been proved to be, to express Affirmation, it will follow, that the infinitive is not even a part of the verb. For it expresses no affirmation ; it has no reference to persons or substances ; it forms no compleat sentence by itself, nor even when joined to a noun, unless it be aided by some *real* part of a verb either expressed or understood. *Lego, legēbam, legi, legeram, legam, I read, I was reading, I have read, I had read, I shall read, do, each of them, amount to a compleat affirmative sentence* : but *legere, to read, legisse, to have read, lecturum esse, to be about to read, affirm nothing, and are not more applicable to any one person, than to any other.*

But, though the Infinitive is no part of the verb, even as the ground whereon the house stands is no part of the building, it may be

considered as the foundation of the whole verb; because it expresses the simple attribute, on which, by means of inflections and auxiliary words, the authors of language have reared that vast fabric of moods and tenses, whereby are signified so many varieties of affirmation, and action, of time, person, and number. And this attribute it expresses abstractly, as something capable of being characterised by qualities, or made the subject of a proposition; which comes so near the description of a noun, that in most languages it may be used, and frequently is used, as a noun: whence some ancient grammarians called it, *the verbal noun*, or, more properly, *the noun of the verb* \*. Thus *Scire tuum nihil est* † is the same with *Scientia tua nihil est*; and *Reddes dulce loqui, reddes ridere decorum*, is equally elegant and expressive with, *Reddes dulcem loquelam, reddes decorum risum* ‡. Thus, in English, we may say, “*Death* is certain,” or “*To die* is certain;” “He loves *learning*,” or “He loves *to learn*.”—In some languages, particularly the Italian and Greek, the article is prefixed to these infinitive nouns; which, if possible, makes their substantive nature still more apparent; as *Il mangiare*, the eating; *l'essere*, the being: || *To philosophēin boulomai ēper to ploutein*, I choose *to philosophize* rather than *to be rich*; which is the same with, I choose *philosophy* rather than *riches*. But to such infinitives we do not prefix the article in English, because custom has so determined; nor in Latin, because that language has no article §. In the Classick tongues, they supply the

\* Non inepte hic modus (Infinitivus) a veteribus quibusdam *Verbi Nomen* est appellatum. Est enim (si non vere ac semper, quod nonnulli volunt, *Nomen Substantivum*) significatione certe ei maxime affinis; ejusque vices sustinet per omnes casus. Rudiman. Gram. major. par. ii. pag. 217.

† Persius.

‡ Horace.

|| Το φιλοσοφῆεν βουλομαι ἕπερ το πλουτειν.

§ Pronominal articles are sometimes joined to these infinitives in Latin: as, *Cum vivere ipsum turpe sit nobis. Totum hoc displicet philosophari. Cicero.*



place of all the cases: in English, they may go before a verb, as nominatives, as “*To learn is desirable;*” or after it, as accusatives, as “*I desire to learn;*” but they never follow a preposition, so far as I recollect, except in one passage of Spenser, which, being contrary to idiom, or at least obsolete, is not to be imitated:

For not to have been dipt in Lethe lake  
 Could save the son of Thetis *from to die*:

that is, The having been dipt in Lethe could not save the son of Thetis *from death*.

Some authors will have it, that there are also in language an Interrogative mood, expressing a desire of verbal information; and a Requisite, expressing a desire of being assisted or gratified. And this last they subdivide into two species, the Precative, when we address a superiour, and the Imperative, when we command an inferior. But such a multiplying of moods appears to be unnecessary. The Requisite differs not *in form* from the Imperative\*. The Interrogative is commonly expressed, not by any form of the verb contrived on purpose, but by a particular arrangement of the words, as *It is so: Is it so?*—or by the addition of some particle, as *Est verum: estne verum?*—or merely by a change in the emphasis or tone of the speaker, as, *I did so: You did?* meaning, Did you so indeed?—And it is well observed, by the learned and accurate Ruddiman, “that if we will constitute as many moods, as there  
 “are various modifications wherewith a verb or affirmation may  
 “be affected, we must multiply them to a very great number;  
 “and, besides the Indicative, Subjunctive, Potential, Optative,  
 “Imperative, and Interrogative, have also a Permissive, an Hor-  
 “tative, a Precative, a Concessive, a Mandative, a mode to ex-

\* In Hebrew, an earnest request is signified by adding to the Imperative the particle *na*; as *Hosanna, Save, I beseech thee*.

“pres volition, and another to signify duty:”—which, instead of improving the grammatical art, would only render it the more confused and difficult, without adding any thing to the regularity or significancy of language.

Since, then, it appears, that the Potential may be resolved into the Indicative and Subjunctive; that the Optative is superfluous, being, even in Greek, a sort of Subjunctive; that the Imperative is an Elliptical form of the Indicative; that the Infinitive is no mood at all; and that the other supposed moods abovementioned have no real foundation in language, nor claim any particular notice from the Grammarian;—it seems to follow, that to verbs, considered as expressive of affirmation, two moods only are *necessary*; the Indicative, to signify *affirmation absolute*; and the Subjunctive, to denote *affirmation relative, dependent, or conditional*. Indeed it is not easy to conceive any mode of affirmation, which may not be resolved into one or other of these two. And, in the Latin tongue, which is not defective in this particular, there are, properly speaking, no more than three moods, the Indicative, Subjunctive, and Imperative: which last I shall allow to be a mood, (as it is found in so many languages) though not a necessary one.—As to the Infinitive, it is impossible to prove, by any just reasoning, that it has any title to the name of mood, or even to be considered as a part of the verb.

In fact, we might repeat, in regard to Moods, a remark formerly made on the degrees of comparison of adjectives. Their number is in nature indefinite: but as nothing in language can be so, it is more convenient to reduce them to two or three, which by means of auxiliary words may be sufficient to comprehend them all, than vainly to endeavour to provide an adjective for every possible degree of comparison, or a mood for each particular energy of mind that may give a character to affirmation.

That

That I may not be thought more paradoxical than others, in what has been advanced on this subject, I shall conclude it with observing, that Perizonius reduces the moods of a finite verb to three, the Indicative, Subjunctive, and Imperative; that Rudiman includes the Optative and Potential in the Subjunctive; that the learned author of an *Essay on the Origin and progress of language* admits, with me, only two moods of affirmation; that Scaliger denies that moods are necessary to the verb; and that Sanctius explodes them altogether, as having no natural connection with it.

And in behalf of this opinion of Sanctius and Scaliger many plausible things might be said. The moods seem reducible to two, the Indicative and Subjunctive. Every scholar knows, that a considerable part of the elegance of the Latin verb arises from the right application of them; and that, if in Cicero, Cesar, and Virgil (for example) the tenses of the latter were to be changed into the corresponding tenses of the former, the language would appear even uncouth in the sound, as well as inaccurate with respect to the sense. But it may be questioned, whether this is not in part the effect of habit. We have always been accustomed to Subjunctive tenses in Latin; and can hardly conceive that it would be intelligible without them. And that without them it would not be elegant, is allowed. But, setting elegance aside, and independently on the habits acquired in reading the classics, might we not, in one way or other, express every necessary affirmation, by means of the Indicative only? Certain it is that, in many cases, if the laws of syntax would permit, the sense would not hinder us from using that mood instead of the other. In vulgar English, as already observed, this is done every moment, without any other inconvenience, than that of offending the critick, and gradually corrupting the purity of our tongue. Nay, there is reason to think, that many people now speak and write English, without ever using a Subjunctive,

tive, (except *would*, *could*, and some other auxiliaries) or knowing that there is such a thing in the language. Even the Latin Grammarian allows, of certain conjunctions, that they may govern either of these moods. And where the rule for the use of the Subjunctive is more determinate, as in sentences like the following, *Nescio an bonus sit*, I know not whether he *be* good, the Indicative *might*, without ambiguity, express the meaning, *Nescio an bonus est*, I know not whether he *is* good.

If then the Subjunctive, however ornamental and useful, is not to be reckoned among the necessities of social life, we need not be surpris'd, that in Hebrew, in which simplicity is more studied than ornament, the moods should be only two, the Indicative and Imperative. The Infinitive, indeed, is named as a third mood in the grammar of the language; but that is in compliance with the erroneous practice of other grammarians.

GERUNDS and SUPINES are of great importance in Latin; but being in a manner peculiar to that language, it belongs not to Universal Grammar to consider them particularly. Yet a remark or two on the subject may not be improper.

The *Gerund* is a noun derived from the verb; but is no part of the verb, because in itself it does not possess the power of affirmation. It has two distinct offices. When in the nominative case it is joined to *est* with a dative, or in the accusative to *esse* with a dative, it denotes *necessity* or *duty*: as *moriendum est mihi*, I *must* die; *Scio moriendum esse mihi*, I know that I *must* die: *Vivendum est mihi recte*, I *ought* to live honestly; *Fateor vivendum esse mihi recte*, I confess that I *ought* to live honestly. In this use, it is properly called a *gerund*; for that word implies, that something must be, or is to be, done. And there is in Greek a sort of participial adverb, sometimes called the adverb of position, which expresses the meaning of this gerund, as \* *Iteon moi*, *Eundum est mihi*, I *must* go:

\* ἴτεον μοι.

\* *oisticon kai elpisticon, ferendum et sperandum est*, we ought to endure and to hope. In English, and other modern languages, there is nothing correspondent to this gerund; its place being supplied by an auxiliary verb, of duty, *ought*, or of necessity, *must*.

In another view, the Latin gerund is a verbal substantive, approaching in signification to that of the infinitive noun; but having this advantage over the Latin infinitive, that it admits of terminations to mark its cases, and coincides more easily in syntax with nouns and adjectives. Examples may be seen in the Latin grammar. In Greek this sort of Gerund is the less necessary, because the infinitive itself may be resolved into cases, by means of the neuter article: as, † *ek tou oran gignetai to eran*, of seeing comes loving; ‡ *to ploutein estin en to chresthai*, Being rich consists in using. We have in English a verbal noun, of the same form with our active participle, which noun coincides in meaning with this Latin gerund: as, he is incapable *of writing*, he is addicted *to writing*, he *practises writing*, he is fatigued *with writing*.

From the infinitive of the Hebrew, by means of certain prefixed letters, (which are indeed contracted prepositions) are formed four words called Gerunds; which are very serviceable in that language, and sometimes supply the place of what in other tongues we term the plusquamperfect tense, and Subjunctive mood. Thus from *masor, tradere*, are formed *bemsor, in tradendo*; *chimsor, cum tradidissim*, &c.; *limsor, ad tradendum*; *mimsor, a tradendo*. This somewhat resembles the use, which, in Greek, by the help of prepositions and the neuter article, may be made of the infinitive taken as a noun.

The origin of the word *Supine*, as a term in grammar, has given rise to several conjectures. Sanctius, who never hesitates, is of

\* οἶστον καὶ ἐλπίστον.

† ἐκ τοῦ ὄραν γίγνεται τὸ ἔραν.

‡ τὸ πλουτεῖν ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ χρῆσθαι.

opinion, that the word so called is an emblem of a supine or indolent man: for that, as the business of such a man must be done by others, so the office of the *supine* may be executed by various other phrases; *discedo lectum*, for example, by *discedo lecturus*, by *discedo ad legendum*, and by *discedo ut legam*. Priscian thinks, not less whimsically, that the Supine, being placed in grammars at the bottom of the verb, seems to support the whole weight of the conjugation; like a man lying *supine*, or with his face upwards, and pressed down to the earth by a huge pile of burdens. — But however mysterious their name may be, the nature of the two Latin supines is very well understood. Like the gerunds, they are no parts of the verb, but verbal nouns; the first ending in *um*, which is always of the accusative case, governed by *ad* understood, and preceded by a verb of motion; and the second in *u*, which is always of the ablative, governed by *in* understood, and preceded by an adjective: as *abiit (ad) deambulatum*; *facile (in) dictu*. So they are explained by the most accurate of all Latin Grammarians, Ruddiman.

I shall now give some account of the several species or sorts of verbs, and so conclude this part of the subject.

In all the languages I know, and probably in all others, Verbs are of different sorts. Exclusive of the verb of existence, which is of a peculiar character, and has been already described, they may all be divided into Active, Passive, and Neuter.

1. As human affairs depend upon Action, and as human speech is employed on human affairs, it must happen, in all possible conditions wherein we can be placed, that affirmations will often be made in regard to actions. Verbs, therefore, which affirm concerning action, and which are called *Active*, there must be in all languages; as *I love, thou blamest, he strikes, they pursue*.

2. Every created being that *acts* is liable to be *acted upon*: and what we suffer, or feel, from being acted upon, that is, from being the *subjects* or the *objects* of action, must be of great importance to life and happiness, and therefore cannot fail to be spoken of, under the form of affirmation, and so render *Passive* verbs necessary; as *thou art loved, I was blamed, he is stricken, they are pursued*. In the *Classick* tongues, the greatest part of the *passive Verb* (or *Passive Voice*, as it is also called) is formed from the *active*, by a change of termination; as *amor*, I am loved, from *amo*, I love; \* *τυπτομαι*, I am beaten, from † *τυπτο*, I beat. But, in the modern tongues of Europe, the *Passive verb* is made up of the *participle passive*, expressing the attribute, and of the verb of existence denoting the affirmation and the time; as *Amor, I am loved; Cul-pabitur, he will be blamed*.

When the name of the being that acts, or the pronoun which stands for that name, leads the sentence, the verb, assuming its nature, is *active*; as *Cæsar subegit Galliam*, Cæsar subdued Gaul. When the being which is acted upon, that is, when the subject, or when the object of the action, leads the sentence, the verb is *Passive*, as *Gallia subacta est a Cæsare*, Gaul was subdued by Cæsar.

I distinguished between the subject, and the object, of an action; and there is reason for doing so in this place. The *subject* of an action is affected by the action; the *object* of the action is not so affected. Thus, when I say, I hear a sound, I see a man, *man* and *sound* are the *objects*; and when I say, I build an house, I break a stone, *house* and *stone* are the *subjects*, of the action. The first is called *intentional* action, the second is called *real*. Both are expressed by *active verbs*. For, though in the actions called *intentional* we are partly *passive*, because an impression is made upon us; yet there is an energy on our part, as we may exert our will, and employ

\* τυπτομαι.

† τυπτω.

our organs, for the purpose, either of receiving that impression, or of excluding it.

Active verbs are subdivided into *Transitive* and *Intransitive*. An active transitive verb is so called, because the action signified by it *passes from* the agent (*transit*) towards some other person or thing; as, I *see* a man, I *build* an house. This verb, therefore, is naturally placed between two substantives; the first denoting the agent, which is of the nominative case, because there is nothing to make it of any other; and the second, denoting the person or thing, towards which the action is exerted; and which, in languages that have cases, is commonly of the accusative, though sometimes also of the genitive, the dative, or the ablative, according to the arbitrary rules of the language; as, *Potitur rerum, favet amico, utitur fraude*. — In the modern tongues, which have little or no variety of cases, that which acts is naturally put before the verb, (for the agent is always prior to the action, as the cause to the effect) and that which is acted upon is put after the verb; as, Achilles flew Hector: and, in allusion to the terms of Greek and Latin grammar, we call the first the nominative, and the last the accusative; though they derive these names, not from their inflection (for they have none), but merely from their position, or from their dependence upon the verb. Sometimes, however, where the sense cannot be mistaken, or where we have an oblique case, we may change this order, for the sake of harmony, of energy, or of variety; and put the nominative after the accusative, or even after the verb: as, Him they flew; Me they insulted; Created thing nor valued he, nor shun'd.

When one acts upon, or towards, any object, that object is Passive in regard to the action: and, therefore, all these active transitive verbs may be changed into passives, when that which is acted



acted upon leads the sentence; as *Ego laudo te*, I praise thee; *Tu laudaris a me*, thou art praised by me.

An Active *Intransitive* verb is that whose action *does not pass* from the agent to any other person or thing; as I live, I run, I walk. This sort of verb cannot properly take an accusative after it, because the actions have nothing exterior to the agent upon which they can be said to be exerted; nor, consequently, can it be changed into a passive, because, where actions are not exerted upon, or towards, any thing, there is nothing passive in regard to those actions. — Intransitive verbs are by most authors called *Neuter*, that is *neither* active nor passive: but I think with very little propriety. Passive indeed they are not; but surely it will not be pretended, that in running, walking, flying, &c. there is no action. — When they take an accusative after them, as *vivere vitam felicem*, to live a happy life; *ire longam viam*, to go a long journey, they put off the Intransitive character, and are to be referred to the other class of active verbs; and their place may be supplied by verbs transitive. Thus, to *live* a happy life, *vivere vitam felicem*, is the same with *degere vitam felicem*, to *lead* a happy life: and, to *go* a long journey, is the same with, to *perform* a long journey.

3. That is properly a *Neuter* verb, which affirms neither action nor passion; but simply denotes the state, posture, or quality, of things or persons; as *Sto*, I stand; *manes*, thou remainest; *dormit*, he sleeps; *floremus*, we are flourishing; *albetis*, ye are white; *mortui sunt*, they are dead. It is obvious, that these verbs, like those of the former species, can neither take accusatives after them, nor be transformed into passives; because, where there is no action, nothing can be acted upon. True it is, that in some languages, both neuter and intransitive verbs are used in the passive *impersonally*: but this is an idiom, depending, not on the nature of things, but on the arbitrary rules of those languages; and besides, when this

is done, whatever the *form* of the verb may be, the *signification* is not necessarily passive. Thus *statur* may mean *stant*; *curritur*, *currunt*; *turbatur*, *est turba*; *pugnatur*, *pugnant*.

These, I think, are all the sorts of verbs that are necessary in language, and, consequently, all that Universal Grammar has to consider. But, in the Greek and Latin grammars, other kinds of verbs are specified; which I shall give some account of, though a very brief one. For, first, they do not properly come within my plan; and secondly, they may all, in respect of signification, be referred to one or other of the classes already mentioned.

When the same being that acts is also the subject or object of the action, the verb may be called *Middle*; as Acteon *saw himself* in the stream, Cato *slew himself*. This, in most languages, may be expressed by an active verb governing the reciprocal pronoun: but, antiently, it seems, the Greeks expressed it by a particular series of inflections, that have been called by Grammarians *the middle voice*. Few examples, however, of reciprocal action signified by this middle verb, can now be produced, except from the earliest authors\*. In latter times, it came to resemble the Deponent of the Latins; having a signification purely active, though, in some tenses, a passive termination.

The Hebrews have a form of the verb, or, as it is called, a Conjugation, which resembles in its use the old middle verb of the Greek tongue. Those of their Grammarians, who reject the vowel-points as a rabbinical and modern invention, reduce the conjugations to five, which they name *Kal*, *Niphal*, *Hiphil*, *Hophal*, and *Hithpael*. These five may be reduced to three; for *Kal* and *Niphal* are but the active and passive voices of the same verb; and so are *Hiphil* and *Hophal*. *Hithpael* has no passive.

\* See Hom. Il. iii. 141. xiii. 168. Odyss. v. 491. ix. 296.

In *Kal* we have the primitive verb, as *masar*, *tradidit*, *he delivered*: for, among the Hebrews, the third person singular of the preterit is the root of the verb. In *Hiphil* something of Causation is implied; as *himsir*, *tradere fecit*, *he caused to deliver*.

*Hithpael* is the form, that corresponds to the old Greek middle verb: as *hithmaser*, *tradidit se*, *he delivered himself*. This at least is its most common signification. In neuter verbs, however, it differs not materially from the conjugation *Kal*: *halach* and *hithbalach* both signify *ambulavit*, *he walked*. And sometimes it emphatically expresses *assuming the appearance* of a character without the reality. “There is, says Solomon, *nithghasber*, that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is *nithrosbesb*, that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.”

It may be remarked here, though foreign from the subject, that in certain English neuter verbs of Saxon original something is discernible, not unlike the analogy of the Hebrew conjugations *Kal* and *Hiphil*. *To sit*, *to lie* \*, *to rise*, *to writhe*, *to fall*, are neuters, that might be referred to the former conjugation; to which correspond the following actives in *Hiphil*, *To set*, *to lay* \*, *to raise*, *to wreathe*, *to fell*, that is, *to cause to sit*, *to cause to lie*, *to cause to rise*, *to cause to writhe*, *to cause to fall*.

#### Inceptive

\* Is it not strange, that, in the present language of England, not only in conversation, but even in some printed books of considerable name, the neuter *to lie*, and the active *to lay* should be so frequently confounded; and that, instead of *he lies* on the ground, and *he lay* on the ground, it should be said *he lays*, and *he laid*? Would not a man of education be ashamed to be found ignorant of the difference between an active and a neuter verb? Or could he think it creditable to mistake *jecit*, *he threw*, for *jacuit*, *he lay*? Yet this vulgar idiom is not less barbarous. If the humour of confounding active verbs with neuter should continue to prevail, we may soon expect to see, and to hear, sentences like the following: “I *laid* in bed till eight; then I *raised*, and *set* a while in a chair; when on a sudden a qualm came on, and I *felled* upon my face.”—Our life must come to an end; but let us live as long as we can: our language may alter; but let us wish it permanent, and do our best to make it so.

*Inceptive* verbs are appropriated to the beginnings of action, or rather of condition; as *calesco*, I begin to be warm; *tumescō*, I begin to swell. In Latin, they are often productive of elegance, by preventing circumlocution; but they are not found in the Greek, nor are they necessary in any language.

Equally unnecessary, though not less elegant, are the Greek and Latin *Desideratives*, which signify desire; as \* *brófeió*, *esurio*, I desire to eat; † *poleméfeió*, *bellaturio*, I have a desire to go to war.

*Deponent* verbs, which with an active signification have a passive termination, as *loquor*, I speak; and *Neutral-passive* verbs, which have an active termination and a passive signification, as *vapulare*, to be whipped, *veneunt*, they are sold, are not uncommon in the Latin tongue. The former are said to have their name from *deponere*; because they *lay aside* that passive sense, which one would expect from their final syllables.—The verb *liceo* is a very singular one; for with an active termination it has a passive sense, and with a passive termination an active sense: *Liceor* means, I offer a price; and *Liceo*, I am valued or set at a price.

The Latin *Frequentative* verb denotes frequency: as *pulso*, I strike often, which is an active transitive; *curfīto*, I run often, which is an active intransitive; and *dormīto*, I sleep often, which is neuter. This verb is not necessary; but, like the inceptive and the desidera-

Pope has in one place, for the sake of a rhyme, admitted this barbarism. Priam, lying at Achilles's feet, says, *Iliad* xxiv,

For him, through hostile camps I bent my way,  
For him, thus prostrate at thy feet I lay:

which is the more provoking, because it is in one of the finest passages of the poem, and in a passage where, in general though not throughout, the Translator has the honour to outdo his original. It might have been easily avoided.

For him, through hostile camps I pass'd, and here  
Prostrate before thee in the dust appear.

\* Βρωσειω.

† πολεμειω.

tive, it contributes something to that elegant conciseness, which is so peculiarly the character of the Roman language.

*Impersonal* verbs are used only in the third person singular; and in Greek, Latin, and Italian, never appear with a nominative before them: as \* *dei, oportet*; *cessi, licet*; *basto*, it is enough; the person, concerning whom they affirm, being expressed by an oblique case dependent on the verb; as *interest omnium*, all are concerned; *licet tibi*, you may, or it is allowed you; *penitet me*, I repent; *mi basta*, it is sufficient for me. The English verbs, *it behoves, it irks, it becomes*, are also called *Impersonal* by our Grammarians; and do indeed resemble the Greek and Latin impersonals in two respects, that they are only used in the third person singular; and that they express the person, concerning whom they affirm, by a subsequent or dependent oblique case: for we cannot say, *I behove*, or *thou behovest*; but we say, *It behoves me, it behoves thee*. But these English impersonals differ from the ancient in this, that they have always before them a nominative expressed: for, *behovs me, irks me, becomes me*, without the pronoun *it* prefixed, are not according to the English idiom.

It has been disputed, whether the Greek and Latin *Impersonal* verbs are always dependent on a nominative understood or expressed: and by very able Grammarians the matter has been decided in the affirmative. Thus, to *refert omnium, negotium* or *res* is the supposed nominative: and *delectat me studere* seems to be nothing different from *studere delectat me*; where *studere*, the infinitive noun, is properly the nominative to *delectat*. The controversy is foreign from my purpose, and therefore I will not enter upon it. I shall only observe, that among the Latin Grammarians it was carried on with a vehemence that is ridiculous enough. Priscian had said,

\* *dei* — *ἰξῆσι*.

that all Impersonal verbs are really Personals, because they have nominatives, which, whether expressed or not, are still implied. He was answered by Augustinus Saturnius, in the following terms : “ May the Gods confound you, Priscian, together with that same doctrine of yours”—and he goes on to urge his objections. “ Nay but,” replies Sanctius, “ may the Gods confound you, Augustine, together with those cavillings of yours ; for I do maintain, that Priscian is in the right :”—which in the sequel he endeavours to prove. Ruddiman, who had more sense, as well as more temper, than any of these wise men, observes very coolly and properly, that, whatever be determined concerning the supposed nominative of impersonal verbs, this we are sure of, that it never can be a *person*, but must always be a *thing* : for which reason, the verbs in question are called *Impersonal* ; a name, that conveys a pretty just idea of their nature.

## S E C T. V.

*The Subject continued. — Further Remarks on the Participle.*

**T**HAT the Participle expresses a quality or attribute with time, has more than once been taken for granted in the course of this investigation, and is generally admitted by Grammarians. Ruddiman, one of the most cautious of them, declares it to be essential to the Participle, first, that it come immediately from a verb, and, secondly, that in its signification it include time. And therefore, continues he, *larvatus*, masked, is not a participle, because it comes from a noun, and not from a verb; and *tacitus*, silent, though it comes from a verb, is not a participle, because it does not signify time\*. And all the writers on Universal Grammar that I am acquainted with concur in the same doctrine.

And this is, perhaps, the most convenient light, in which the Participle can be considered in Universal Grammar: for it is not easy, nor, I believe, possible to describe it more minutely, without entering into the idioms of individual tongues. In fact, the participles of some languages differ widely in their nature from those of others: and even, of one and the same language, some participles seem to be of one character, and some of another.

1. As the first grammarians drew all their ideas from the Greek tongue, in which there are participles correspondent to the present, preterit, and future tenses; it was natural for them to suppose present time to be included in the participle of present time (as it is called), past time in the preterit participles, and future time in the participles of the future. And this being once supposed by the acuteſt of all Grammarians, the Greek, might naturally be ad-

\* Rudiments of the Latin tongue, page 62.

mitted unexamined, or but slightly examined, by their brethren of other countries, and of latter ages.

But the Greek participles of the present do not always express present time; nor is past time always referred to by their preterit participles: nay, on some occasions, time seems not to be signified at all, by either the former, or the latter. When Cebes says, *Et unchanomen peripatountes en tô tou Chronou hierô\**, We were walking in the temple of Saturn, the participle of the present, *walking*, is by means of the verb, *were*, applied to time past, (which an adjective in the same connection might have been); and therefore of itself cannot be understood to signify any sort of time. If one choose to affirm, that the participle thus applied must signify time: then the words *at a walk*, or the adjective *merry*, must also signify time, when it is said, We were *at a walk* in the meadow, or, We were *merry* in the meadow;—which no body, I think, will maintain.—Again, When we read in the Gospel, *Ho pisteusas sôthêsetai †*, the participle belongs to the aorist of past time, and the verb is of future time; yet we must not render it, “ He who believed shall be saved:” for it appears from the context, that the believing here spoken of is considered as posteriour in time to the enunciation of the promise. Here, therefore, the participle loses the signification of past time: and may be rendered, by the indefinite present, “ He *who believeth* shall be saved;” or by the future, (which often coincides in meaning with the indefinite present) “ He *who will believe* shall be saved;” or merely by a noun, which in its signification is not connected with time, “ *The believer* shall be saved.”—Can it be said then, that the participle in this place necessarily implies any signification of time, when we see, that its full import may be expressed, either by present, or by future

\* Ἐτυγχάνομεν περιπατούντες ἐν τῷ τῆ χρονῆ ἱερῶ.

† Ὁ πιστεύσας σωθήσεται. See Mark xv. 16.

time,



time, or without any reference to time past, present, or future?—Greek, as well as Latin and English, participles, often take the signification of nouns, and consequently lose that of time: as \* *ho peirazōn*, the tempter, *ho kektēmenos* †, the master, or proprietor.

2. In Latin, the future participle of the active verb does indeed express future time: *Scripturus*, about to write. But the future participle of the passive, in *dus*, “ does not so much import futurity (I quote the words of Ruddiman) “ as necessity, duty, or merit. “ For there is a great difference between these two sentences, *Dicit* “ *litteras a se scriptum iri*, and *Dicit litteras a se scribendas esse*; the “ first signifying, that a letter will be written by him, or that he “ will write a letter; and the second, that a letter must be written “ by him, or that he is obliged to write a letter. For (con- “ tinues our Author) though Sanctius and Mess. de Port Royal “ contend, that this participle is *sometimes* used for simple futurity, “ yet I think, that Perizonius and Johnson have clearly evinced “ the contrary:” ‡—that is, I presume, that it is *never* used for simple futurity.

The Latin active participle of present time is frequently used to denote a quality simply, and as it is at all times, or without reference to any particular time; in which case, it assumes the nature of an adjective, or perhaps even of a noun: as *amans æqui*, a lover of equity; or, one whose general character it is at all times, that he loves equity.

The Latin passive participle of past time (as it is called) may likewise, by losing all signification of time, become an adjective; as in the words *doctus*, *eruditus*, *spectatus*, *probatus*, &c.: and is sometimes, by means of the substantive verb, applied even to future time in that tense, which is commonly called *the future of the*

\* ὁ πειραζών.

† ὁ κεκτημένος.

‡ Rudiments of the Latin tongue, page 47.

*subjunctive*, but which ought to be called *the future perfect of the indicative*: *amatus fuero*, I shall have been loved.

It appears then, that of the Greek and Latin Participle it is not enough to say, that "it is a word derived from a verb, and denoting an attribute with some signification of time." But this definition will be found still more inadequate, when applied to the participles of the modern languages.

3. In English (and what is said of the English participle will in general hold true of the French and Italian):—in English, I say, we have but two simple participles; which are here exemplified by *writing*, and *written*. For *about to write*, or *going to write*, is a complex, and indeed a figurative, way of expressing the import of a Latin and Greek participle, *graphōn*, and *scripturus*.

The first, *Writing*, is the participle of the active verb; the other, *Written*, is the participle of the passive: *I am writing* a paragraph; but *it is not yet written*. It may be added, that the former signifies *imperfect action*, or action begun and not ended; *I am writing* a sentence: and that the latter signifies *action complete, perfect, or finished*; the sentence *is written*.—This appears to be a less exceptionable way of distinguishing them, than if it had been said, that the former expresses *present time*, and the latter *time past*.

But, of itself, does not the first denote present, and the second past, time? I answer, No. Let us examine them in their order.

By the first participle, *Writing*, when joined to a verb of present time, present action is no doubt signified: but it is signified, not by the participle, but by the tense of the verb; for the same participle, joined to a verb of a different tense, may denote either past or future action;—we may say, not only *I am writing*, but also, *I was writing* yesterday, and *I shall be writing* tomorrow. Nor let it be suspected, that this participle varies its time, when joined to the substantive verb only. It may be joined to other verbs, and still

still admit the same variety: he *went* away *muttering*; he *will* *return* *smiling*; he *walks* about *meditating*.

The second, *Written*, which I call the passive participle, is commonly thought to be naturally enough referred to past time, because it expresses complete action: for an action is certainly past, when it is completed. But this participle may, for all that, be referred to present time, and to future, as well as to past. The letter *is now written*: it *was written yesterday*: it *will be written tomorrow*. It is not the time, in these examples, signified by the verbs *is*, *was*, and *will be*, as really as in the following; the sea *is now calm*: it *was calm yesterday*: it *will be calm tomorrow*? If then, in the former sentences, the participle *written* signify an attribute with time, the adjective *calm*, in the latter examples, must also signify an attribute with time: in which case, it will be difficult to distinguish between the nature of the adjective, and that of the participle. But, suppose the participle *written* to be *passive*, and to signify *complete action*; and it may, in its nature, be easily distinguished from the adjective *calm*; which does not imply either *action received*, or *action complete*.

But if *Written* be a passive participle, why do we meet with it in the compound tenses of the active verb; in the preterperfect, *I have written*; in the plusquamperfect, *I had written*; and in the future perfect, *I shall have written*? This question will not appear of hard solution, if we vary a little the order of these auxiliaries. Instead, then, of, *I have written a letter*, *I had written a letter*, and *I shall have written a letter*, say, *I had a letter written*, *I have a letter written*, and, *I shall have a letter written*; an order, which, on some occasions, and on subjects that admit a more harmonious phraseology, might be tolerated in verse: and it will appear, that the participle *written* belongs, not to the nominative *I*, the person *who acts*, but to the accusative *letter*, the thing *acted upon*, or (to give it

it in other words) the thing which in respect of the action is *passive*.

That this is a true state of the case, and no arbitrary supposition, may appear from the analogy of other modern languages. In French, wherever the participle is *declined*, it agrees in gender and number, not with the agent, but with the thing acted upon: as, *La barangue que j'ai faite*, and, *Les vers que j'ai faits*; not *fait* in either case. The same holds in Italian.\*

If it be asked, whence this mode of speaking could take its rise; it may be answered, that in the barbarous Latin used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (when the modern tongues began to assume their present form) it was not uncommon, instead of *Amavi illum*, I have loved him, and *Scripti literas*, I have written the letter, to say *Habeo illum amatum*, and *Habeo scriptas literas*. The new languages adopted the idiom. Or perhaps the idiom passed from the new languages into the barbarous Latin of that time.

As the passive participle *written*, when combined with the active auxiliaries *have* and *had*, supplies tenses in the active verb, I have written, I shall have written, I had written: so, when combined with the active participle *having*, the same passive participle forms an active preterperfect participle. For *having written* is as really such in English, as † *γεγραβός* is in Greek. And this, being further combined with the perfect participle of the substantive verb *been*, supplies a preterperfect passive participle, *having been written*, which exactly corresponds to the Greek *γεγραμμένος* ||. The same perfect participle passive *written*, joined with the imperfect active participle of the substantive verb, *being*, makes a present perfect participle passive, *being written*, which gives the meaning of the Greek ‡ *γραφόμενος*.

\* So in Diodati's Bible. Genes. iii. 12, 13. Ed Adamo disse, *La donna che tu hai presa meco*, &c.—E la Donna rispose, *Il serpente m' ha seddotta*, &c.

† γεγραβός.

|| γεγραμμένος.

‡ γραφόμενος.

One of the greatest defects in the English tongue, with regard to this part of speech, seems to be the want of an *imperfect passive participle*. For example: If it be asked, What is your friend doing? and answered, He *is building* a house; this is right: for the imperfect active participle, with the present tense of the substantive verb, expresses properly enough *action just now going on, but not finished*. But if to the question, Is your friend's house built? the answer, which is not uncommon, be given, No, but it is building; this is not right, because a passive sense is signified by an active participle. We must, therefore, in this case, if we would speak grammatically, vary the phrase, and say, No, but he is building it; or something to that purpose.

In old English, this defect was sometimes supplied by prefixing the preposition *in* to the active participle: as, "Forty and six years was this temple *in building*." But this would now appear formal; and indeed, in the case supposed, hardly intelligible: The house is not built, but it is *in building*.

In the original Greek, of the passage quoted in the last paragraph from the second chapter of St. John's Gospel, the verb is of the first aorist passive; which, it seems, might signify imperfect and continued action, as well as indefinite past time. In Latin, it might be rendered, according to the idea which our Translators must have had of it, *Quadragesima et sex annos hoc templum ædificabatur*. For that this is the true grammatical sense of the imperfect passive, though not always adhered to by Roman writers, we have the authority of Ruddiman.\*

If

\* The indicative tenses of the Passive Latin verb are thus distinguished by that most accurate Grammarian. — "Let the subject of discourse be the building of a house.  
 " 1. When I say *Domus ædificatur*, I mean that it is just now a building, but not  
 " finished. 2. When *Ædificabatur*, that it was then, or at a certain past time, a build-  
 " ing,

If the Participle essentially implies time, it would not be easy to give a reason, why neuter verbs should not, as well as active, have participles both of present time, and of past. According to the common theory, *dormiens*, sleeping, is the present participle of a neuter verb: but where is the preterit participle? Of active verbs we have participles of either sort; *amans*, loving, *amatus*, loved; *audiens*, hearing, *auditus*, heard, &c. But of *dormio*, I sleep, *sedeo*, I sit, *florco*, I flourish, though there are participles of present time (as they are called) *dormiens*, sleeping, *sedens*, sitting, *florens*, flourishing, there are none of past time. And yet, these attributes may be spoken of as past, as well as present. He slept, he sat, he flourished, may be said, as well as, he sleeps, he sits, he flourishes.

How is this difficulty to be solved? By rejecting the common theory, and adopting what is here offered. Call the one participle *Active*, and the other *Passive*: and then, what is more easy, than to say, that to Neuter verbs, which can never be Passive, no passive participle can ever belong?

Excepting, therefore, the Greek participles, which are more numerous, and perhaps less understood, than those of other tongues;

“ing, but not then finished. 3. *Ædificabitur*, that some time hence it shall be a build-  
 “ing, without any formal regard to the finishing of it. — But when I make use of the  
 “*Participle perfecti*, I always signify a thing compleated and ended: but with these  
 “subdistinctions. 1. By *Ædificata est*, I mean simply, that it is finished; without  
 “any regard to the time when. 2. *Ædificata fuit*, it is finished; and some time since  
 “has intervened. 3. *Ædificata erat*, it was finished at a certain past time referred to,  
 “with which it was contemporary. 4. *Ædificata fuerat*; it was finished before a cer-  
 “tain past time referred to, to which it was prior. 5. *Ædificata erit*, it shall be finished  
 “some time hereafter, either without regard to a particular time when; or with respect  
 “to a certain time yet future, with which its finishing shall be contemporary. 6. *Ædi-*  
 “*ficata fuerit*, it shall be finished and past before another thing yet future, to which its  
 “finishing shall be prior.” — The Author then goes on to show, which he does in  
 a very ingenious and satisfactory manner, how it comes to pass, that these tenses are so  
 often used promiscuously by Latin writers. See *Rudiments of the Latin Tongue*, page 45.

may we not, from what has been said, infer, that Participles, *as expressing the attribute of the verb without affirmation*, ought to be distinguished, not into those of past, present, and future time, but into, 1. *Active and imperfect*, which signify action, or condition, begun, continuing, and unfinished, as *scribens*, writing, *dormiens*, sleeping: 2. *Passive and Perfect*, which denote action complete, as *scriptus*, written: and, 3. *Future*, expressive of action, or condition, which is to commence, but has not yet commenced, as *scripturus*, about to write, *dormiturus*, about to sleep, and (if you please) *scribendus*, about to be written.

If now it be asked, in what respects the adjective differs from the participle: I answer, first, that the former, though it may be derived from a verb, (as *tacitus*, silent, from *taceo*) is not, like the participle, necessarily derived from it: and, secondly, that those *varieties* of expression and form, which relate to the *continuance*, *completion*, and *futurity*, of *action* and *condition*, and which belong essentially to the participle, are not characteristical of the adjective. Other distinctions might be specified, but these are sufficient. — The Adjective denotes a quality simply: the Participle denotes a quality, together with several other considerations relating to the continuance, completion, and futurity, of action and condition.

These remarks were reserved to this place: because, without the knowledge of some things in the two last sections, they could not be understood. If, on account of the unavoidable repetition of certain technical terms, the reader should find them in any degree obscure, he needs not be discouraged; as none of either the foregoing, or the subsequent, reasonings depend upon them.

## S E C T. VI.

*The subject of Attributives continued. — Of Adverbs.*

THE Greek word \* *Epirrhéma*, which answers to *adverb*, properly signifies something *additional to an attributive*: for, as was already observed, all sorts of attributives, the adjective and participle as well as the verb, were called † *rhémata*, or verbs, by the antient grammarians. In this etymology of the name, we partly discern the nature of an Adverb. It is a word joined to attributives; and commonly denotes some circumstance, manner, or quality, connected with their signification.

Adverbs are joined — to verbs, as *fortiter pugnavit*, he fought *bravely*; — to participles, as *graviter sauciatus*, *grievously* wounded; — to adjectives, as *egregie fidelis*, *remarkably* faithful. They are joined even to nouns: but, when this happens, the noun will be found to imply the meaning of an attributive; as when Livy says, *admodum puella*, *very much* a girl, the sense plainly is, a girl *very young*. Adverbs are also joined to adverbs: for the circumstances, manners, or qualities, denoted by this part of speech, may themselves be characterised by other circumstances, manners, or qualities; as *multo minus audacter*, *much less boldly*; *sat cito si sat bene*, *soon enough if well enough*.

Some grammarians consider the adverb as a secondary attributive; or, as a word denoting the attribute of an attribute. Theodore Gaza says, that it is, as it were, the verb's epithet or adjective: and Priscian observes, that, when added to verbs, it has the same effect which an adjective has when joined to a noun. And

\* ἐπιρρήματα.

† ῥήματα.

that



that this is a true character of many adverbs, cannot be denied: for which reason I have referred this part of speech to the chapter of *Attributives*. A verb, adjective, or participle cannot be where a substantive is not, either expressed or understood: and an adverb is equally dependent upon its *verb*. When I say, Cesar fought valiantly; the attribute *fought* is characterized by the adverb *valiantly*, as Cesar the person is by the verb *fought*. Agreeably to this notion of Adverbs, it would be easy to specify a great number of them, which limit, enlarge, or otherwise modify, the meaning of the verbs, participles, adjectives, and adverbs, to which they are joined: as, he walked *much*, he walked *little*, he walked *slowly*, *quickly*, *gracefully*, *awkwardly*, &c.; — he was wounded *slightly*, *grievously*, *mortally*, *incurably*, *dangerously*; — *more* brave, *less* brave, *prudently* brave, *ostentatiously* brave, &c.; — bravely, *more* bravely, *most* bravely, *very* bravely, *much less* bravely, &c.

Many adverbs there are, however, which do not so properly mark the attributes of attributes, as some remoter circumstance attending an attribute or our way of conceiving it, and speaking of it. Such are the simple affirmative and negative *yes* and *no*. — Is he learned? No. Is he brave? Yes. Here the two adverbs signify, not any modification of the attributes *brave* and *learned*; but a total negation of the attribute, in the one case; and, in the other, a declaration that the attribute belongs to the person spoken of. — Such also are those adverbs, of which in every language there is a great number, that denote *time*, *place*, *certainity*, *contingency*, and the like: as, he is *here*, he will go *tomorrow*, he will *certainly* come, he will *probably* speak. For, when I say, “He goes *slowly*,” I express by the adverb a certain modification of going; — but when I say, “he will go the day after this day,” or, “he will go *tomorrow*,” I say nothing as to the *mode* of going, nor do I

3 L 2

characterize

characterize the attribute *going* at all; I only say, that, at such a time, *going* will be the attribute, or the action, of such a person.

Adverbs are indeed applied to many purposes; and their general nature may be better understood by reading a list of them, than by any description or definition. Most of them seem to have been introduced into language, in order to express by one word the meaning of two or three: *in what place*, for example, by *where?* — *to what place*, by *whither?* — *in a direction ascending*, by *upward*; — *at the present time*, by *now*; — *at what time*, by *when?* — *at that time*, by *then*; — *many times*, by *often*; — *not many times*, by *seldom*; — *it is done as it should be*, by *well done*; — *it is done with wisdom*, by *wisely done*; — *it is certain that he will come*, by *he will certainly come*, &c. Even *yes* may be expressed by circumlocution, without an adverb; as, Are you well? *Yes*; that is, *I am well*. And, where the predicate of a negative proposition may be supplied by a word of contrary meaning, *No* or *Not* may be dispensed with, and the proposition becomes positive: Are you sick? *No*: that is, I am well; — He is *not* present, that is, he is absent.

In Hebrew, though there are several adverbs of negation, there is no affirmative adverb answering to *yes*. *Yea* occurs only once in the English Old Testament, namely in the third chapter of Genesis, where it has a different meaning. The defect is always supplied by a periphrasis, in the way here hinted at: as, Is he well? *He is well*. The Latin seems originally to have been deficient in the same respect. *Ita*, *etiam*, and *maxime*, are, when used in this sense, elliptical circumlocutions.

Hence it appears, that adverbs, though of great use, because they promote brevity, and consequently energy, of expression, are not among the most essential parts of language; because their place might be supplied in almost all cases, by other parts of speech. However they are found in great abundance, in most languages: whence

whence we may infer, that it is natural for men to have recourse to them on certain occasions.

Adverbs expressive of quality are in Greek, Latin, English, &c. almost innumerable. In Hebrew, they are not very many; but the want is easily supplied. The masculine of the adjective is often used adverbially; *tob* is *bonus* and also *bene*; *Rang* is both *malus* and *male*:—which is sometimes done in English; as when *right*, *wrong*, *ill*, *well*, &c. are used adverbially, as well as for adjectives. But this want the Hebrews more commonly supply by a preposition and a noun: for *truly*, they say *in truth*; for *righteously*, *in righteousness*. Even in adjectives they do not greatly abound. They say, *God of justice*, instead of *just God*; and *throne of glory* instead of *glorious throne*. We often do the same: we may say indifferently, either a wise man, a wealthy man, a courageous man, &c. or a man of wisdom, of wealth, of courage, &c.

I said, that Adverbs promote energy of expression. But this happens only when they promote brevity too, and are sparingly used, and chosen with judgement. A superabundance of them, or of adjectives, makes a style unwieldy and tawdry. For it is from its nouns, rather than from its attributives, that language derives strength: even as a building derives stability rather from the walls and rafters, than from the plastering, wainscoting, and painting. Young writers, however, are apt to think otherwise; and, with a view to invigorate their expression, qualify every verb with an adverb, and every noun with an epithet. And so, their compositions resemble a house, whose walls are supported by posts and buttresses; which not only make it unseemly to the eye, and inconvenient by taking up too much room, but also justify a suspicion, of weakness in the work, and unskilfulness in the architect. Such a period as the following will explain what I mean. “ I am honestly, seriously, and  
“ unalterably of opinion, that nothing can possibly be more in-  
“ curably

“ curably and emphatically destructive, or more decisively fatal, to  
 “ a kingdom, than the introduction of thoughtless dissipation, and  
 “ the pomp of lazy luxury.” \* Would not the full import of this  
 noisy sentence be better expressed thus: “ I am of opinion, that  
 “ nothing is more ruinous to a kingdom, than luxury and dissipa-  
 “ tion ?”—Now observe, that in the former there are eight adverbs  
 and four adjectives, and in the latter one adjective, and one adverb.  
 If two garments are sufficient for elegance and use, who would  
 burden himself with twenty? But this by the by.

Some authors affirm, that adverbs may be found in all the ten  
*Categories*; and think, that the most effectual way of arranging them,  
 is to refer them to the several categories to which they belong.  
 The Categories, or, as they are called in Latin, the Predicaments,  
 are ten general heads of division, to which Aristotle and his fol-  
 lowers supposed, that every thing, or idea, conceivable by the hu-  
 man understanding, might be reduced. They are as follows.  
 1. Substance. 2. Quantity. 3. Quality. 4. Relation. 5. Action.  
 6. Passion. 7. Time. 8. Place. 9. Situation. 10. Habit; or,  
 the being Habited †. This arrangement was long considered as  
 Perfect; but has fallen into disrepute, since the Peripatetick philo-  
 sophy began to decline. It must be owned, however, that, if we  
 arrange the Adverbs according to it, we shall have a pretty extensive

\* *The pomp of lazy luxury*—a phrase of Lord Shaftesbury’s.

† “ Cornelius was forced to give Martin sensible images. Thus calling up the  
 “ coachman he asked him what he had seen at the bear-garden. The man answered, he  
 “ saw two men fight a prize; one was a fair man, a sergeant of the guards; the other  
 “ black, a butcher: the sergeant had red breeches, the butcher blue: they fought upon  
 “ a stage about four o’clock, and the sergeant wounded the butcher in the leg. Mark,  
 “ quoth Cornelius, how the fellow runs through the predicaments. Men, *substantia*;  
 “ two, *quantitas*; fair and black, *qualitas*; Sergeant of the guards and Butcher, *Relatio*;  
 “ wounded, *actio et passio*; fighting, *situs*; stage, *ubi*; four o’clock, *quando*; blue and  
 “ red breeches, *habitus*.”—If the reader is unacquainted with the categories, this ex-  
 ample will be a help to his memory.

idea of their nature, and of the various purposes to which they may be applied. But this has never been done, so far as I know, by any grammarian; and therefore I am apprehensive, that the following attempt may be found erroneous.

1. Under *Substance*, the first category, may be comprehended such adverbs as *Essentially, substantially, spiritually, corporeally, angelically, Socratically, &c.*

2. Under *Quantity*, the second, may be arranged those adverbs, that denote extension, or number. Of the former sort are, *much, greatly, exceedingly, enough, almost, scarcely*, and the like. Of the latter are *once, twice, thrice, secondly, thirdly, fourthly, &c.*

3. *Quality*, the third category, is, according to Aristotle, of four species: comprehending, first, Intellectual habits, to which correspond such adverbs as *virtuously, vitiously, wisely, valiantly, foolishly, &c.*; secondly, Natural powers of the mind or body, to which may be referred, *powerfully, sensibly, willingly, forcibly, feebly, &c.*; thirdly, Qualities perceived by sense, expressed adverbially by *softly, warmly, coldly, loudly, sweetly, clearly, &c.*; fourthly, Figures of things with or without life, to which class we may refer, *elegantly* (shaped), *circularly, triangularly, &c.*

4. The adverbs that signify *Relation* (the fourth predicament) are of various kinds. They express, first, Resemblance, as, *so, thus*; secondly, Contrariety, as, *otherwise, differently, contrariwise, &c.*; thirdly, Order, as, *afterwards, next, first, secondly, &c.*; fourthly, Coexistence, or Assemblage, as, *together, jointly, &c.*; fifthly, Separation, as, *separately, diversely, only, chiefly, especially, singularly, &c.*; sixthly, Cause and Effect, as, *therefore, consequently, &c.*

5. *Action* is the fifth category: and, as there are many sorts of it, so are there many classes of adverbs to express it. As, first, Bodily action, *swimmingly, snatchingly, cursim, carptim, &c.*;

secondly, Mental action,—as desire, *utinam*, *O that*;—denying or forbidding, *no*, *not*;—assuring, *indeed*, *certainly*, *undoubtedly*;—granting, as *well* (be it so);—affirming, as *yes*, *truly*;—preferring, as *rather*, *especially*;—doubting and conjecture, as *perhaps*, *possibly*, *probably*;—interrogation, in regard, first, to time, as *when?* secondly, to place, as *where?* thirdly, to quantity, as *quantum*, *quot*, how much, how many? fourthly, to quality, as *how*, *quomodo?*—Motion, as *swiftly*, *slowly*, &c.;—Rest, as *quietly*, *silently*, *still*.

6. Adverbs belonging to the sixth category, and expressive of *Passion*, are, *confusedly*, *distractedly*, *feelingly*, and the like.

7. Those that belong to the seventh, which is *Ubi*, or *Place*, are very numerous, and by Ruddiman are divided into five classes. They signify, first, in a place, as *where?* *here*: secondly, to a place, as *whither?* *hither*: thirdly, towards a place, as, *backward*, *forward*, *upward*, *downwards*, &c.: fourthly, from a place, as *whence?* *hence*, *thence*: fifthly, by or through a place, as (in Latin) *qua?* *hac*, *illac*, *alia*, which, however, are no adverbs, but pronouns of the ablative case, to which *viâ* is understood.

8. The eighth predicament, *when?* or *time*, may be supposed to comprehend all the adverbs of time; which are also very numerous, and may be divided into, first, those of time present, as *now*, *today*: secondly, those of time past, as *then*, *yesterday*, *lately*: thirdly, those of time future, as *presently*, *immediately*, *tomorrow*, *not yet*: fourthly, those of time indefinite, as *when*, *sometimes*, *always*, *never*: fifthly, those of continued time, as *long*, *how long*, *long ago*: sixthly, those of repeated time, as, *often*, *seldom*, *again*, *now and then*, &c.

9. *Situation*, or *Position*, the ninth predicament, has not many adverbs belonging to it. *Supinely*, however, is one: and, *obliquely*, *pronely* (if there be such a word) *sideways*, &c. may be others.

10. The tenth, *Habitus*, denotes something additional and exterior to a substance, but not a part of it; as a diadem, a coat, a

gown, &c. There are not in any of the languages I know (so far as I remember) adverbs of this signification; such ideas being most commonly expressed by nouns, as, he wore a cloak, his head was encircled with a diadem. Yet I do not deny the reality of such adverbs; and it is possible I may have met with them, though they do not now occur. If the English idiom would allow the word *succinctly* to have its original meaning, it might perhaps be an adverb of the tenth category; as in this example, He was dressed *succinctly*, that is, in garments tucked up:—but this is not English; nor is *succinto* in Latin ever used in any other sense, than that of *briefly*, or *compendiously*.—By the by, I cannot see, for what purpose Aristotle made a separate category of the tenth; for to me it seems included in some of the preceding. A *crown* is as really a *substance*, as the head that wears it, and may last a thousand years longer\*. Or, if it is *the having* of the crown, or *the being crowned*, that distinguishes the category, as when we say, *a crowned head*, then *crowned* denotes a quality perceived by sense, and so belongs to the third predicament. Indeed this is not the only objection that might be made to the doctrine of the categories. Whoever treats of it in the way of detail, and without prejudice, will find, if I mistake not, that in some things it is redundant, and in others defective. Wishing, however, to give in this place some account of that celebrated division; as it was for many ages believed to be the foundation of all human science; I chose to arrange the adverbs by categories, rather than according to that simpler (though not less comprehensive) scheme, which is given by the learned and accurate Ruddiman in his Rudiments of the Latin tongue.

\* “The greatest difficulty was, when they came to the tenth predicament. Crambe affirmed, that his *habitus* was more a *substance* than he was; for his cloaths could better subsist without him, than he without his cloaths.” *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*.—Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat?

Since this was written, PHILOSOPHICAL ARRANGEMENTS have been published; a work of uncommon erudition; in which the doctrine of the Categories is unfolded at large, with great precision of language, and in a style as entertaining, as can well be applied to arguments so abstracted, and of so little use. I say, Of so little use: for after all that the ingenious and elegant author has advanced, I am sorry to be obliged to declare, that in this doctrine I see little more, than an elaborate solution of trifling difficulties made on purpose to be solved: as conjurors are said to have raised ghosts, and other shadowy bugbears, merely to show their address in laying them. It may have been a convenient introduction to the verbal part of the Greek philosophy, and to the art of sophistical declamation: but of its tendency to regulate the understanding, to illustrate moral truth, or to promote the improvement of art, or the right interpretation of nature, I am not sensible at all. This is said, not with any view to detract from others; but only to account for my own conduct, in dismissing, after so slight an examination, that celebrated part of antient literature.

As to the formation and derivation of adverbs, it depends so much on the idiom of particular languages, that one cannot enter upon it, without going beyond the bounds of Universal Grammar.



## C H A P. III.

## OF INTERJECTIONS.

THE Interjection is a part of speech in all the languages known to Europeans. Whether it be in all others, is not certain. For, though it have its use, and may often promote pathos or energy, we cannot say, that it is so necessary, as the noun, the pronoun, or the attributive. Its place might indeed be supplied, in most cases, by other words, if the customs of society would permit. I am sorry, or, I feel pain, conveys the same meaning with *alas!* though perhaps not so emphatically: but the defect of emphasis may be owing to nothing more than this, that the one expression is less common than the other on certain occasions. In like manner, without being misunderstood, we might say, instead of *fye!* I dislike it, or, I abhor it; and, instead of *strange!* (*papa!*), I am surprised, or, I am astonished, might be used with no bad effect.

The name *Interjection* expresses very well the nature of this part of speech. It is a word *thrown into* discourse (*interjectum*) in order to intimate or express some emotion of the mind: as, I am, *alas!* a miserable sinner: *fye, fye!* let it not be heard of: *well done!* (*euge!*) thou hast proved thyself a man. It is, indeed, as Ruddiman observes, a compendious way of conveying a sentence in a word, that the shortness of the phrase may suit the suddenness of the emotion or passion expressed by it.

For Interjections are not so much the signs of thought, as of feeling. And that a creature, so inured to articulate sound as man is, should acquire the habit of uttering, without reflection, certain

vocal sounds, when he is assaulted by any strong passion, or becomes conscious of any intense feeling, is natural enough. Indeed, by continual practice, this habit becomes so powerful, that in certain cases we should find it difficult to resist it, even if we wished to do so. When attacked by acute pain, it is hardly possible for us not to say *ah!* or *alas!*—and, when we are astonished at any narrative or event, the words, *strange! prodigious! indeed!* break from us, without any effort of the will.

In the Greek Grammar, Interjections are referred to the class of adverbs; but, I think, improperly. They are not adverbs in any sense of the word. They express not the attributes of attributes; nor are they joined to verbs, to participles, or to adjectives, as adverbs are; nor do they limit or modify the signification of attributives in any respect whatever. The Latin grammarians have, therefore, done better, in separating the interjection from other parts of speech, and giving it a particular name. And in this they are followed by all who have written grammars of the modern tongues.

It has been said, that interjections are the remains of those barbarous cries, by which (according to the Epicurean system) the first men expressed their feelings, before the invention of the art of speech. But I deny, that Speech is an art, in this sense of the word. I cannot conceive, how a set of mute, savage, and beastly creatures should on a sudden commence philosophers, and form themselves into an academy, or meet together in a large cave, in order to contrive a system of words, which, without being able to speak themselves, they afterwards taught their dumb and barbarous brethren to articulate. Orpheus, performing at a publick concert, for the entertainment of lions, tygers, and other wild beasts of quality; or Amphion making the stones and trees dance to the sound of his harp, till, after many awkward bounces and caperings, they at last took their seats, in the form of towns and castles, are in my judgment as

reasonable suppositions. It admits of proof, from the nature of the thing, as well as from history, that men in all ages must have been speaking animals; that the young learned the art by imitating their elders; and that our first parents must have spoken by immediate inspiration. \*

Some grammarians maintain, that the interjection is no part of speech at all, but a mode of utterance common to all nations, and universally understood:—in other words, that *fye, alas, buzza, euge, apage, eh bien, abilaffo*, &c. are as common, and as intelligible, over the whole earth, as a displeas'd, a sorrowful, a joyful, or an angry countenance. It is strange, those authors did not recollect, that, if we except O! Ah! and one or two more, the interjections of different languages are as different as their nouns or verbs: *ai* in Greek being express'd by *eheu* in Latin, and in English by *alas!*—and *woes me!* being in Latin *hei mihi*, and in Greek *oimoi*. Some interjections indeed may be borrowed by one nation from the language of another; thus *apage* and *euge* are the same in Latin and in Greek. But some nouns and verbs are, in like manner, borrowed by one nation from another; yet we do not suppose, that such words, because current in Greece, Italy, and England, are universally intelligible, or form any part of that language, which, in contradistinction to *artificial*, I have formerly described under the name of *natural*. †

Interjections, though frequent in discourse, occur not often in elegant composition. Unpractis'd writers, however, are apt to exceed in the use of them, in order, as they imagine, to give pathos to their style: which is just as if, in order to render conversation witty or humorous, one were to interrupt it with frequent peals of laughter. The appearance of violent emotion in others does not always raise violent emotion in us: our hearts, for the most part,

\* See Part i. chap. 6.

† Part i. chap. 1.

are more effectually subdued by a sedate and simple utterance, than by interjections and theatrical gesture. At any rate, composure is more graceful than extravagance; and therefore, a multitude of these passionate particles will generally, at least on common occasions, favour more of levity than of dignity; of want of thought, than of keen sensation. In common discourse this holds, as well as in writing. They who wish to speak often, and have little to say, abound in interjections, *wonderful, amazing, prodigious, fye fye, O dear, Dear me, bum, bab, indeed, Good life, Good Lord*, and the like: and hence, the too frequent use of such words tends to breed a suspicion, that one labours under a scantiness of ideas.—In poetry, certain superfluities of language are more allowable than in prose; yet some elegant English poets are at pains to avoid interjections. Tragick writers are often intemperate in the use of them. We meet with entire lines of interjections in the Greek plays. But it is yet more provoking to see an English tragedian endeavour to work upon the human heart by such profane expletives, as *Flames and furies! Damnation! Heaven and earth!* not to mention others of still greater solemnity. If the poet has no other way to make up his verse, or to show that his hero is in earnest, I would recommend to him the more harmless phraseology of Fielding's *Tom Thumb*,

Confusion! horror! murder! guts! and death!

Interjections denoting imprecation, and those in which the Divine Name is irreverently mentioned, are always offensive to a pious mind: and the writer or speaker, who contracts a habit of introducing them, may without breach of charity be suspected of profaneness. To say, with a devout mind, *God bless me*, can never be improper: but to make those solemn words a familiar interjection expressive of surprise or peevishness, is, to say the least of it, very indecent.

As to common oaths and curses, I need not say any thing to convince my reader, that they are utterly unlawful, and a proof that the speaker has at one time or other kept bad company. For to the honour of the age let it be mentioned, that profane swearing is now more generally exploded in polite society, than it used to be in former times. In this respect, as in many others, the wits of Charles the second's reign were most infamous. Queen Elizabeth was addicted to swearing: and most of our old kings and barons are said to have distinguished themselves by the use of some one particular oath, which was in their mouths continually. There is a great deal of this ribaldry in the poems of Chaucer.

In the antient Grammars we have adverbs of swearing, and interjections of imprecation: nay, I think I have been told formerly, that in Latin, and in Greek too perhaps, there are oaths for men, and oaths for women; and that if either sex invade the privilege of the other in this matter, it is a violation of the laws of swearing, and of grammar. Swearing seems to have been more frequent in the Grecian dialogue, than in the Roman. Almost every affirmation in Plato may be said to be deposed upon oath.

One interjection, we are told, expresses laughter. But it is rather a mark in discourse, to denote, that the speaker is supposed to laugh in that place. For if, instead of the inarticulate convulsion which we call laughter, one were to pronounce those three articulate syllables, *ha ha he*, the effect would be ridiculous. Laughter is no part of speech, but a natural agitation, common to all mankind, and universally understood.

It is needless to subjoin a list of Interjections, as they are but few, and may be seen in any common grammar.

## C H A P. IV.

## Of Connectives and Articles.

EVERY individual word, which is comprehended under the several species hitherto mentioned, conveys some idea to the mind, even when pronounced separate. Thus *love*, the noun, *lovely*, the adjective, *lovest*, the verb, *loving*, the participle, *lovingly*, the adverb; thus the pronouns *I*, *thou*, *he*, *that*, *this*, *she*, *they*, &c.; and thus the interjections, *alas*, *fie*, *strange!*—have, each of them, some meaning.

But some sorts of words there are, which, like ciphers in arithmetick, have no significancy when separate, though when joined to other words they are very significant. Thus, *from*, *in*, *and*, *with*, *the*, convey no idea. But when I say, “ He came *from* London, “ *in* the chariot, *with* a friend *and* servant,” the sense is compleat; and is made so by these little words; which are now so important, that, if we leave them out, and say, “ He came London the chariot a friend servant,” we speak nonsense.

It may be observed, that there are in this sentence two other little words, that of themselves mean nothing, *a* and *the*, but which, when connected, as above, are found to be *useful*, though not absolutely *necessary*. For, if we say, “ He came from London “ in chariot with friend and servant,” there is a meaning; which, though awkwardly expressed, according to the idiom of our tongue, may however be guessed at; and which, rendered literally into Latin, Venit Londino in curru cum amico et servo, is neither awkward nor ungrammatical.

Those words, therefore, which become significant by being connected with other words, may be divided into two classes; the *Necessary* and the *Useful*. The former we call *Connectives*; the latter *Articles*. Of which in their order.

## S E C T. I.

## OF CONNECTIVES.

EVERY thing that is a Connective in language must connect either words or sentences, that is, either ideas or affirmations. When I say, "He came from home," the word *from* connects two words, *came* and *home*: when I say, "He came from home, and he comforted me," the word *and* connects two sentences; the first, "He came from home;" the second, "He comforted me." The former sort of Connectives are termed *Prepositions*; the latter, *Conjunctions*.

§ 1. *Of Prepositions: with Remarks on the Cases.*

The term *Preposition* signifies *placing before*: and it is true of almost all the words of this class, that they are, or may be, *put before* the word which they connect with something previous: as, "The enemy armed *with* darts, and mounted *on* horses, fled *from* us, *in* confusion, *over* the plain, *towards* the river, *at* the foot *of* the mountains, *beyond* which they could not pass."

A *Preposition* may be defined; "A part of speech, not significant of itself, but of such efficacy, as to unite two significant words, which, according to the nature of things, or the rules of the language, could not otherwise be united." The former part of this definition must be plain enough already: the latter may need illustration. Let us inquire then, what is meant by saying, "that some words, from the nature of things, and others, by the rule of the language, can be united in no other way, than by prepositions."

First, when things are intimately connected in nature, one would think, that the words which stand for them might easily coalesce in language, without the aid of connectives. And so in fact they often do. No two things can be more closely united, than a substance and its quality; a man, for example, and his character. These therefore of themselves coalesce in all the known languages: and we say, a *good man*, a *tall man*; *vir bonus*, *vir procerus*. Here prepositions are quite unnecessary. — Further, there is a connection equally intimate between the agent and the action; for the action is really an attribute of the agent: and therefore we say, the *boy reads*, the *man walks*; the noun coalescing with the verb so naturally, that no other word is requisite to unite them. — Moreover, an action, and that which is acted upon by it, being contiguous in nature, and mutually affecting each other, their names would seem to be mutually attractive in language, and capable of coalescing without external aid; as, he *reads a book*, he *beats his breast*, he *builds an house*, he *breaks a stone*. — Further still; an attributive is naturally and intimately connected with the adverb which illustrates or modifies its signification: and therefore, when we say, he *walks slowly*, he is *very learned*, he is *prudently brave*, it is plain that no preposition can be necessary to promote the coalescence. — These few examples may suffice to show, that, from the very nature of things, some words may be, and are connected, without the aid of prepositions.

But, secondly, it is no less natural, that, to mark the connection of some other words, prepositions should be necessary. If we say, “the rain falls heaven; — the enemy ran the river; — Creusa walked Eneas; — the tower fell the Greeks; — she led him the house; — Lambeth is Westminster-abbey;” — there is observable in each of these expressions, either a total want of connection, or such a connection as produces falsehood or nonsense: and it is evident,



evident, that, before they can be turned into sense, the gap must be filled up by some connecting word; as thus, “the rain falls *from* heaven; — the enemy ran *towards* the river; — Creusa “walked *behind* Eneas; — the tower fell *upon* the Greeks; — she “led him *into* the house; — Lambeth is *over against* Westminster-“abbey.” — We see then, how prepositions may be necessary to connect those words, that in their signification are not naturally connected.

Thirdly; It was hinted, that, by the rule of certain languages, some words, though coalescing in sense, cannot be connected in discourse, without prepositions. When this happens, it is owing to some peculiar defect, or to some other peculiarity, in those languages. For example: the instrument wherewith one performs an action must have a natural connection with that action; so natural indeed, and so intimate, that they cannot be separated. The words, therefore, which stand for them, may, in languages that decline their nouns by cases, be united without a preposition: as *Scribit calamo*. But, if a language has no cases, or very few, it may so happen, that merely by subjoining the name of the instrument to the active verb we shall *not* be able to mark the connection. Thus, in English, “he writes a pen,” having no definite sense, cannot mark connection, or any thing else. Here then, in our tongue, a preposition comes to be necessary to ascertain a particular union of words, which, according to the English idiom, cannot be so conveniently united in any other way; and so we say, “he writes *with* a pen.” I say, — “which cannot be *so conveniently* “united:” for that without a preposition the same sense *may* be expressed, admits of no doubt; as, “he writes, and a pen is the “instrument.” What then is the advantage of using prepositions in a case of this kind? The advantage is considerable: for by this simple expedient we signify in few words what would otherwise

require many. — Again, in the Latin idiom, *Arguitur furti* has a definite meaning; the first word denoting accusation, and the second a crime; and the connection between them being marked by the case of the noun. But in English, “He is accused theft,” has no clear meaning; because there is nothing to show, how the words are connected, or whether they be connected or not. But, by means of a preposition (which supplies the want of a case) “He is accused *of* theft,” we unite them together, and remove all doubt in regard to their signification.

The Latin Grammarians reckon up twenty-eight prepositions governing the accusative case; fifteen that take the ablative; and four, that have sometimes the one case, and sometimes the other: — in all forty-seven. But several of these are superfluous; some rarely occur; and a few are by the best Grammarians accounted adverbs rather than prepositions. Hence we may infer, that many prepositions are not necessary in language. Those in our tongue hardly exceed thirty.

But it is to be observed, that almost every preposition we are acquainted with has more than one signification, and that some of them have several. The English *of*, for example, denotes *concerning*, as, A Treatise *of* human nature; denotes the matter of which a thing is made, as, a cup *of* silver; denotes the means, as, to die *of* hunger; denotes *among*, as, *Of* three horses two were lame; denotes *through*, or, in consequence of, as, It is *of* the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed; denotes *from*, as, London is south *of* York; denotes *out of*, as, *Of* this little he had some to spare; denotes *extraction*, as, Alexander the son *of* Philip; denotes *belonging to*, as, He is *of* the tribe of Judah; denotes, *containing*, or *filled with*, as, a glass *of* wine, an hoghead *of* ale; — and has several other significations. In like manner, we might specify thirty senses of the preposition *for*; about twenty of *from*, and the same number

nearly of *with*, *by*, and some others: for which I refer to Johnson's Dictionary. These varieties of meaning give trouble to those who are acquiring a language; but are attended with no inconvenience, when one is master of it. So that we may repeat, that a small number of prepositions are sufficient for the ordinary purposes of life. In Greek, which is said to be more perfect than any other tongue, there are only eighteen: most of which, however, vary exceedingly in their signification, according to the cases that they govern, and according as they are used in a proper, or in a figurative, sense.

For I speak here of the *separable* prepositions, which are distinct and complete words. Those that are called *Inseparable*, are not to be considered in Universal Grammar; being neither connectives, nor words, but only syllables, which generally add something to the signification of those words wherewith they are compounded, but never stand by themselves: as (in English) *a*, *be*, *con*, *mis*, *de*, *dis*, &c. in the words, *abide*, *bedeck*, *conjoin*, *mistake*, *decipher*, *displease*, &c.

Prepositions, in their original and literal acceptation, seem all to have denoted Relations of place. This at least is true (if I mistake not) of all the Latin and Greek prepositions without exception, as well as of all the English. *Till*, indeed, or *until*, is now used of time only, as in this phrase, "I never heard of him till this moment:" but antiently it had, and among the vulgar in Scotland it still has, a more general sense, being of the same import nearly with *to* or *towards*; as in this line of Spenser,

He roused himself full blithe, and hasten'd *them until*.

Priscian thinks, that the Latin *clam* is not, as it is commonly said to be, a preposition, but rather an adverb; and assigns this reason among others, that it never has any reference to *place* in its signification.

The

The importance of prepositions, in marking, with equal brevity and accuracy, *relations in place*, will partly appear from the following sentences. “ He went *to* a city, *at* the foot *of* the hill, *over* “ *against* a lake, that stretches *before* a wide common. *On* this side “ *of* the city, the road winds *about* some great rocks, that rise fifty “ feet *above* the level of the plain, then goes straight *towards* the “ west, *among* bushes, *between* two little hills. When he came “ *within* the walls, and had got *nigh* to the market-place, *beneath* “ the citadel, the enemy fled *from* him, *through* the streets, *out of* “ the city, and *along* the banks of the lake, *without* their baggage, “ till they escaped *in* boats *beyond* the river. He followed *after*, and “ was not far *behind*, them; having *with* him some friends, whom “ he had brought *from* home,” &c.

But, in all languages, Prepositions are used figuratively, to signify other relations, besides those of place. For example, as they who are *above* have in several respects the advantage of such as are *below*, prepositions expressing high and low place are used for superiority and inferiority in general: as, “ he is *above* all disguise;—he serves “ *under* such a captain;—he rules *over* the people;—he will do “ nothing *beneath* his high station.”—*Beyond* implies, not only distance of place, but also, that between us and the distant object something intervenes, which is also at some distance; as, “ he is “ *beyond* sea.” But persons, or things, so situated with respect to us, cannot be immediately in our power: and hence, *beyond* is used figuratively, and in general, to signify, *out of the reach*, or *out of the power of*: as “ Goodness beyond thought,—Glorious beyond “ compare,—Gratitude beyond expression.”—Take another example. *By* denotes *nearness*; and *with*, *sameness*, of place: as “ She “ was with him;—I found him close with Swift;—his dwelling is “ by the sea;—By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept.” Now they who are *with* us, or who are *by* us, that is, who are in our company,

company; or who are near at hand, may co-operate with and assist us; but the former with a more immediate agency, and cloſer connection, than the latter. Hence that figurative uſe of the prepoſitions *by* and *with*, which is obſervable in ſentences like the following: He walks *with* a ſtaff, *by* moonlight; He was taken *by* ſtratagem; and killed *with* a ſword.—Put the one prepoſition for the other; and ſay, He walks *by* a ſtaff *with* moonlight: He was taken *with* ſtratagem, and killed *by* a ſword: and it will appear, that they differ in ſignification more than one at firſt view would be apt to imagine:

Hitherto I have conſidered prepoſitions as ſeparate words. But they are often prefixed to, ſo as to form a part of, other words; as *overvalue*, *undergo*, &c. in which caſe, they generally impart ſomething of their own meaning to the word with which they are compounded. And that this imparted meaning has in many caſes an alluſion to place, is well illuſtrated by Mr. Harris, in the following manner. “Suppoſe a given ſpace. *E* and *ex* ſignify *out of* that  
 “ ſpace; *per*, *through* it, from beginning to end; *in*, *within* it, ſo  
 “ as not to reach the boundary; *ſub*, *under* it. Hence, *E* and *Per*  
 “ in compoſition augment. *Enormis* is ſomething not ſimply big,  
 “ but big in exceſs, ſomething got out of the rule, and beyond the  
 “ boundary: *Dico*, I ſpeak, *Edico*, I ſpeak out; whence *ediſtum*,  
 “ an edict, ſomething ſo effectually ſpoken, as that all are ſup-  
 “ poſed to hear and to obey it: *Fari*, to ſpeak, *Effari*, to ſpeak  
 “ out; whence *effatum*, an axiom, or ſelf-evident propoſition,  
 “ addreſſed as it were to all men, and calling for univerſal aſſent:  
 “ *Permagnum*, *perutilis*, great throughout, uſeful in every part.—  
 “ On the contrary, *In* and *ſub* diminith and leſſen. *Injuſtus*, *iniquus*,  
 “ unjuſt, unequitable; that *lies within* juſtice and equity, that  
 “ reaches not ſo far, that falls ſhort of them. *Subniger*, blackiſh;  
 “ *ſubrubicundus*,

“ *subrubicundus*, reddish; tending to black, and tending to red, but  
 “ *under* the standard, and *below* perfection.”

So far Mr. Harris. I shall only add, that it is not easy to account for some coalitions of this nature; as, for example, the English compounds *understand* and *understanding*. It may, however, be offered, in the way of conjecture; that, as he who *stands under* a thing perceives its foundation, and how it is supported, and whether it be well supported; so he may be said to understand a doctrine, who comprehends the grounds or evidences of it\*. Many such words there are in every language, to exercise the wit of the fanciful etymologist.

Words compounded with prepositions are very numerous in most tongues, but especially in Greek. There we find prefixed to a word, not only one preposition, but frequently two, and sometimes even three. Thus † *hupēkproluein* is compounded of three prepositions (answering to *under*, *from*, and *forward*) and a verb signifying *to loose*; and this word is used by Homer to denote the *unyoking* of mules, by drawing them *forward*, *from under* the chariot. Other languages may express the same ideas by means of three or four words; but none, I believe, but the Greek, could express them all in one. ‡

Some English prepositions change the meaning of verbs, by being put after them. Thus, to cast, is to throw, but, to *cast up*, is to compute, or calculate: to give, is to bestow, but, to *give over*, is to cease, to abandon, to conclude to be lost: to knock, is to beat, but to *knock under* is a vulgar idiom denoting submission. So, to

\* Mr. Harris gives another etymology. See *Hermes*, page 371.

† ὑπεκπρολυεῖν Odyss. vi. 88. See also Odyss. vi. 87.

‡ So λαμβανεῖν to take; καταλαμβάνειν to take hold of; προκαταλαμβάνειν to take hold of before another, to preoccupy; ἀντιπροκαταλαμβάνειν, to preoccupy in opposition to another.

*take after*, to learn of, to resemble; to *take off*, to copy, or mimick; to *take on*, to be much affected; to *take up*, to reform; to *take up with*, to be contented with; and innumerable others.

A preposition often loses its connecting power, and becomes an adverb. Thus *round* is a preposition, when one says, He went round the walls; and an adverb when it is said, I turned round, to see who called me. The same thing happens in other languages. There are two or three Latin words, of which it is doubted by the best Grammarians, whether they be adverbs or prepositions. But it is not every preposition that admits of such a change. *Of*, *with*, *from*, and some others, are never adverbial.

It may seem strange, that, in the course of this long inquiry concerning the essentials of language, so little should have been said on the subject of CASES. The reason is, that Cases are not essential to language. They are indeed of great importance in Greek and Latin: but a language may be significant enough without them, or at least with very few. We have no Cases in English, except the addition of *S* in the genitive, as, “the Lords day;” and in the pronouns *I*, *we*, *thou*, *ye*, *he*, *they*, *she*, *it*, which in the oblique case become *me*, *us*, *thee*, *you*, *him*, *her*, *them*. And of our genitive in *S* it may be observed, first, that it is less in use now than formerly; and secondly, that it has sometimes a meaning different from that of the other genitive formed by the preposition *of*, as in the above example; for, *the Lords day*, and *the day of the Lord*, are not synonymous; the former signifying *Sunday*, the latter, *the day of judgment*, or, a day in which God will manifest himself in an extraordinary manner. This however may be owing to the repetition of the definite article, which in the latter phrase points out one particular day (or time) different from all others.

Those varieties of signification, which in the Greek and Latin nouns are marked by cases, are in English and the other modern

languages of Europe marked, for the most part, by prepositions; such as *of*, *to*, *for*, *by*, *with*, and *from*. Our nominative and accusative, indeed, are known by their position, the first being put before the verb, and the last after: at least this is the general rule; from which, however, writers, especially poets, often deviate, (as already observed) when that can be done without perplexing the sense.

In Hebrew, the case of the noun is marked by a change made, not in the end, but in the beginning of the word; and this change is plainly a preposition prefixed, but contracted in pronunciation. Thus *melech* is a king; *lemelech*, to a king; *mimelech*, from a king: *el* being the preposition that corresponds to the English *to*; and *min* being synonymous with *from*.

In the Erse or Gaelick, the oblique case, corresponding to the Latin genitive, is characterised by a change in the vowel or diphthong of the last syllable; as *Ossian*, Ossian; *Ossiain*, of Ossian: *Sagard*, a priest; *Sagaird*, of a priest:—the accusative being the same with the nominative; and the dative and ablative distinguished (like our dative and ablative) by prepositions.

There is some inaccuracy in the doctrine of Cases, as commonly received among Grammarians; so that it is not easy, nor perhaps possible, to express the meaning of the word *case* in a definition. For, what is it, that constitutes a case? Is it a peculiar termination, or inflexion of the noun? Then, first, in the plural of Latin nouns, there can be no more than four cases, because there are no more than four terminations; the dative being uniformly the same with the ablative, and the nominative with the vocative. And then, secondly, it cannot be said, that there are, in any one of the declensions, so many as six cases of the singular: for, in the first, the genitive and dative agree in termination; in the second, the dative and ablative; in the third, the nominative and vocative; in the fourth,



fourth, the nominative, vocative, and genitive; and in the fifth, both the nominative and vocative, and the genitive and dative.

In fixing the number of their cases, the Latin grammarians seem to have been determined by three considerations: first, by the termination or inflexion; secondly, by the meaning, or the relation subsisting between the noun and the word that governs it; and thirdly, by a regard to uniformity, or a desire of giving the same number of cases to the singular and to the plural, and of allowing as many to one declension, as to another. And I am inclined to think, that, by this method, though not strictly philosophical, both their declensions and their syntax are rendered more intelligible, than they would have been upon any other plan.

If we admit the termination to be the sole characteristick of a Case, then there are in English no more cases, than the few above specified. If cases are to be distinguished by the different significations of the noun, or by the different relations which it may bear to the governing word, then we have in our language as many cases almost, as there are prepositions: and, above a man, beneath a man, beyond a man, round about a man, within a man, without a man, &c. shall be cases, as well as, of a man, to a man, and with a man. In fact, it can hardly be said, that there are Cases, in any sense of the word, except in those nouns that vary their terminations: and therefore, we may repeat, that there are no cases in English, or very few; and that, consequently, Cases are not essential to language. For that, though the few we have were struck out of the English tongue, it would still be intelligible, though not so elegant, is a point, which can hardly admit of dispute. In some parts of England, *she* is used for *her*, and *we* for *us*, without inconvenience; the genitive in *S* is less frequent than that other genitive which is formed by the preposition *of*, and both are equally perspicuous; and, *of I, to I, of thou, with thou, I saw*

*he, I saw they*, if they were as common, would certainly be as well understood, as *of me, to me, of thee, with thee, I saw him, I saw them*.

The origin of the word *Case*, and of some other grammatical terms relating to nouns, is very oddly explained by some authors; but has plausibility enough to deserve notice. They tell us, that, among the most antient Greek Grammarians, a line falling perpendicularly was the symbol of the nominative case; and that lines falling, not perpendicularly, but with different degrees of obliquity, were considered as the symbols of the other cases. Hence the first obtained the name of *Casus rectus*, or *the erect case*; and the others were called *Casus obliqui*, *the oblique cases*: hence they were all denominated *Casus*, or *Fallings*: and hence, an enumeration of the several cases or fallings of the noun is known by the name of a *Declension*; because it exhibits a sort of declining progress, from the noun's perpendicular form, through its several symbolical obliquities.

If it were asked, Whether a language with cases, like the Greek and the Latin, or one, which, like the English, *declines* its nouns by prepositions, deserve the preference; I should answer; first, that in point of perspicuity neither has any advantage over the other; *Regis, regi, rege*, of a king, to a king, with a king, being all equally intelligible:—and secondly, that the modern has more simplicity than the antient; because he who can decline one English noun may, if he know the singular and plural terminations, decline any other; which is by no means the case in the Latin and Greek.

But, thirdly, it must be allowed, that the Classick tongues derive from the inflection of their nouns a very great superiority, in respect of elegance. For, first, what they express by one word *pennæ* (for example) we cannot express by fewer than two, or perhaps

haps three, *of pen, of a pen, of the pen.* Besides, the varieties of termination in the Greek and Latin nouns contributes not a little to their harmony: while the unvaried sound of our substantives, with the perpetual repetition of such little words as *of, to, for, with,* &c. give a harshness to the language, which would certainly be offensive to an ear, that had long been inured to the modulation of the antient tongues.

But the chief advantage of diversified termination, both in nouns and in verbs, consists (as formerly hinted) in this, that it leaves the composer at liberty to place his words in any order, which he may think will most effectually promote variety, and energy, as well as harmony, of stile. Whereas, in the modern tongues, the relation that one word bears to another being in a great measure determined by their position, we are often confined to one particular arrangement; and, when we depart from that, and attempt those deviations from the grammatical order which are so graceful in antient authors, are apt to write obscurely and affectedly.—In this respect, however, the English tongue is more susceptible of variety than the French, and English verse than English prose. Indeed, almost all arrangements of words, that do not perplex the sense, are permitted in our poetry, especially in our blank verse: a privilege, whereof Milton availing himself in its full latitude, displays in the *Paradise Lost* a variety and elegance of composition, which have never been equalled in any other modern tongue, and may bear to be compared with the most elaborate performances of antiquity.

Our want of inflection in our nouns, adjectives, and participles, makes us, in our written language, more dependent upon punctuation, than the antients were. Indeed, of punctuation, as we understand it, they had no idea: and it does not appear, that they suffered any inconvenience from the want of it. Whereas, in  
4 modern

modern language, the misplacing or omission of a point will often alter the sense: and, if we had no points, we should find it difficult to write so as to be understood; to write elegantly, and yet intelligibly, would be impossible. There is a passage in Cato; which, from being generally, if not always, mispointed, is, I think, generally misunderstood:

The ways of heaven are dark and intricate,  
 Puzzled in mazes, and perplex'd with errors:  
 Our understanding traces them in vain,  
 Lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless search; &c.

Thus the lines are printed in all the editions I have seen. And yet, it can hardly be supposed, that Addison's piety would have permitted him to say, or to make Cato say, that "the ways of heaven are perplexed with errors;" or that his taste would have warranted such an expression as, "the ways of heaven are puzzled." I therefore presume, that the first line is a sentence by itself, and ought to end in a point or colon; and that the sequel, ranged in the grammatical order, amounts to this; "Our understanding, puzzled in mazes, and perplexed with errors, traces the ways of heaven in vain:" which is both elegant and true. Now this ambiguity could not have taken place in Latin or Greek, nor indeed in French or Italian, even though there had not been one point in the sentence: because the participles *puzzled* and *perplexed* would have been made to agree with the singular noun *understanding*; in which case they could not also agree with the plural noun *ways*.

In explaining the several cases, and showing, why there are neither more nor fewer, and why so many, and what is the nature of each, some authors have been more particular, and displayed greater subtlety, than in my opinion was requisite. As to the number of cases, grammarians have always differed in their sentiments, and  
 are

are not reconciled to this day. Many explode the ablative, because the Greeks could do without it; and some will not allow the vocative to be a case, because it is often, both in Latin and in Greek, the same with the nominative. Aristotle and the Peripateticks maintained, that the nominative is not a case; and the Stoicks were equally positive, that it is. In the Armenian language, the number of cases is said to be ten: and I should not wonder, if a grammarian, much given to novelty and paradox, were to affirm, that there are in English as many cases almost as there are prepositions. While opinions are so different in regard to the precise number, it is vain to inquire, why there are neither more nor fewer, and why so many.

The nature of each particular case may be better understood by examples, than by logical definition. Indeed, all the definitions I have seen of the several cases are liable to objection; except, perhaps, that of the nominative, which is given by Mr. Harris, who calls it, “That case, without which there is no regular and perfect sentence.”

“The Accusative,” says the same author, “is that case, which to an efficient nominative, and a verb of action, subjoins, either the effect, or the passive subject:”—the effect, as when I say, *Lyfippus fecit statuas*, Lyfippus made statues; the subject, as in this example, *Achilles vulneravit Heçtora*, Achilles wounded Heçtor.—But this, though frequently, is not universally true. When it is said, *Antonius læsit Ciceronem*, the first word is an efficient nominative, the second an active verb, and the third an accusative, according to the definition: but when I say, *Antonius nocuit Ciceroni*, the efficient nominative and active verb are followed, not by an accusative, but by a dative. And there are other verbs of active signification, as *Portior*, for example, which take after them, rarely an accusative, sometimes a genitive, and frequently an ablative. And what shall

we say of accusatives governed by prepositions; as *habitat juxta montem*, he dwells near the mountain? For neither is *habitat*, he dwells, an active verb; nor is the mountain, in any sense of the words, either the subject or the effect of his dwelling; and yet *montem*, the mountain, is the accusative.

The Genitive, according to the same learned writer, expresses all relations commencing *from* itself; and the Dative, all relations tending *to* itself. Yet, when I say, *editus regibus*, descended of kings, I express a relation commencing *from* the kings, who are, notwithstanding, of the ablative case, in the Latin: and *eripuit morti*, he rescued from death, is in Latin dative, and expresses, for all that, a relation tending, not *to* death, but *from* it.—One may say indeed, that these are refinements in the language, and deviations from the primitive syntax. But I know not, how we are to judge of cases, except from the purposes to which they are applied in the languages that have them; nor on what authority we have a right to suppose, that the primitive syntax of Greek and Latin was different from that which we find in Greek and Latin authors.

In a word, every case, almost, is applied to so many purposes in syntax, that to describe its use in a single definition, seems to be impossible, or at least so difficult, and withal so unnecessary, that it is not worth while to attempt it. None of the antient grammarians, so far as I know, has ever made the attempt: and I believe it will be allowed, that in this sort of subtlety they are not inferior to their brethren of modern times.

### § 2. Of Conjunctions.

I divided Connectives into two classes; Prepositions, which connect words, and Conjunctions, which connect sentences.

A Conjunction may be thus defined: “A part of speech, void  
“ itself of signification, but of such efficacy, as to join sentences  
“ together, and show their dependence upon one another.” The  
Conjunction,

Conjunction, says Aristotle, makes many *one*: and Ammonius compares the words of this class to those pegs and nails by which the several parts of a machine are united.

Perhaps it may be thought, that Conjunctions, as well as prepositions, do sometimes connect words; as when we say, He is a learned *and* a wife *and* a good man. But this sentence, when analysed, will be found to consist of three distinct sentences; — he is a learned man; — he is a wife man; — he is a good man; or, — he is learned, — he is wife, — he is good: which three would for ever remain distinct and separate, if we had no connecting words to unite them in one sentence; even as the several parts of a ship would remain separate, if we had no pegs or nails to fasten them together. So, when it is said, Peter and John went to the temple, it may seem, that the conjunction *and* connects only the two names *Peter* and *John*: but it really connects two sentences, — Peter went to the temple, — John went to the temple; for unless we suppose the words, *went to the temple*, to belong both to Peter and to John, the expression has no meaning.

In this account of the Conjunction, Scaliger, Sanctius, Vossius, Ursinus, and Mr. Harris agree. But Perizonius is of opinion, and Ruddiman seems to think, that conjunctions do sometimes connect words, and not sentences; as in examples, like the following: Saul *and* Paul are the same: This book cost a shilling *and* more: There is war between England *and* France. Each of these, no doubt, is one sentence, and, if we keep to the same phraseology, incapable of being broken into two. For, if instead of the first we say, “Saul is the same — Paul is the same,” we utter nonsense; because the predicate *same*, though it agrees with the two subjects in their united state, will not agree with either when separate. If we say, instead of the second, “This book cost a shilling—this book cost more,” we speak with little meaning, or at least inaccurately.

curately. And, instead of the third, if we say, "There is war between England — there is war between France," we fall into nonsense as before; because the preposition *between*, having a necessary reference to more than one, cannot be used where one only is spoken of.

Yet, from these and the like examples, I do not see that any exception arises to the general idea of this part of speech, as expressed in the definition. For in each of these a double affirmation seems to be implied; and two affirmations certainly comprehend matter sufficient for two sentences. If, therefore, not one of the examples given can, in its present form, be resolved into two, it must be owing, not to the want of ideas, but to some peculiarity in the expression. Let us, therefore, without adding any new idea, change the expression, and mark the consequence.

The first example, "Paul *and* Saul are the same," is very elliptical. Its seeming import is, either that two different names are the same name, which cannot be; or that two different persons are the same person, which is equally absurd. To express the whole thought, therefore, in adequate language, we must say, "Paul and Saul are names that belong to one and the same man." And this plainly comprehends two sentences: Saul and Paul are names, — Saul and Paul belong to one and the same person.\*

In the second example, are plainly implied two affirmations, and consequently two sentences. "This book cost a shilling" — (which is true, though not the whole truth) and — "This book cost more than a shilling."

Even three affirmations, and of course three sentences, may be supposed to be comprehended in the third example. "France is at war — England is at war — They are at war with one another." Taking it in another view, we may say, that here

\* See Part i. Chap. 1. Sect. 2.



one assertion is made concerning the one country, and another of the same import concerning the other, and that there must by consequence be ideas to furnish out two affirmative sentences: “England is at war with France—France is at war with England.”

In some sentences of this nature, the conjunction may be considered as superfluous. Where this happens, the meaning may be expressed in one sentence, without the aid of any conjunction: as, Peter went with John to the temple: Saul is the same with Paul.

Copulative conjunctions, therefore, where they are not quite superfluous, (as if we were to say, I saw twenty *and* four men, instead of twenty four) will I think be found in most, or perhaps in all cases, to connect together either sentences, or words that comprehend the meaning of sentences.

Sentences may be united, even when their *meanings* are disjoined, or opposed to one another. When I say, “Peter and John went *because* they were called,” I join three sentences in one; and the two last are, as it were, the continuation of the first: Peter went—John went—they went *because* they were called. But if it be said, “Peter and John went, *but* Thomas would not go,” though there are three sentences joined in one, as before, the import of the last is, by means of the particle *but*, set in a sort of opposition to the two first. Hence Conjunctions have been divided into two kinds, *Conjunctive*, which join sentences, and also connect their meanings; and *Disjunctive*, which, while they connect sentences, disjoin their meanings, or set them, as it were, in opposition.

These two classes have been subdivided by Grammarians into several subordinate species. It would be tedious to enumerate all the arrangements that have been proposed. I shall just give the heads of Mr. Harris’s subdivision; which will convey an idea of the various uses to which the Conjunction may be applied.

“ 1. The Conjunctions, that unite both sentences and their meanings, are either *Copulative* or *Continuative*. The Copulative may join all sentences, however incongruous in signification: as, Alexander was a conqueror, *and* the loadstone is useful. The Continuative joins those sentences only which have a natural connection; as, Alexander was a conqueror *because* he was valiant.

“ Continuatives are of two sorts, *Suppositive*, and *Positive*. The former denote connection, but not actual existence; as, You will be happy *if* you be good. The latter imply connection, and actual existence too; as, You are happy *because* you are good.

“ Moreover Positive Continuatives are either *Causal* or *Collective*. Those subjoin causes to effects; as, He is unhappy *because* he is wicked: these subjoin effects to causes; as, He is wicked, *therefore* unhappy. \*

“ 2. Disjunctive Conjunctions, which unite sentences while they disjoin their meaning, are either *Simple*, which merely disjoin; as, It is *either* John *or* James: or *Adversative*, which both disjoin, and mark an opposition; as, It is not John, *but* it is James.

“ Adversative Disjunctives are divided into *Absolute* and *Comparative*: Absolute, as when I say, Socrates was wise, *but* Alexander was not; Comparative, as in this example, Socrates was wiser *than* Alexander.

\* *Therefore* was formerly mentioned as an adverb. And an adverb it is, when, without joining sentences, it only gives the sense of *for that reason*. When it both gives that sense, and also connects, as when we say, “ He is good; therefore he is happy,” it is a conjunction. The same thing is true of *consequently*, *accordingly*, and the like. When these are subjoined to *and*, or joined to *if*, *since*, &c. they are adverbs, the connection being made without their help; when they appear single, and unsupported by any other connective, they may be called conjunctions.

“ Adver-

“ Adverfative Disjunctives are further divided into *Adequate* and  
 “ *Inadequate*: Adequate, as when it is faid, He will come *unless*  
 “ he be fick, that is, his ficknefs only will be an adequate caufe  
 “ to prevent his coming; Inadequate, as if it were faid, He will  
 “ come *although* he be fick, that is, his ficknefs will not be a fuf-  
 “ ficient or adequate caufe to prevent his coming.”

That all the Conjunctions neceffary in language may be referred to one or other of thefe heads, I will not affirm. Perhaps it is impoffible to determine, how many may be *neceffary*. This we know, that barbarous nations have but few; that cultivated tongues, like the Greek and Latin, have a confiderable number, (the Latin upwards of eighty); but that of this number fome, being fynonymous with others, and introduced for the fake of variety, cannot be neceffary; though they are ufeful, becaufe they may be ornamental.

Yet from this laft circumftance it muft not be inferred, that there is a redundancy of connectives in thefe languages. We fhall be inclined to think there is rather a deficiency, when we confider, that one and the fame conjunction has often feveral different fignifications. Thus, the Latin *autem* denotes, *but, nay, befides, indeed, on the contrary*; and has other niceties of meaning, to which perhaps there are no correfpondent particles in the Englifh tongue: The true import of fuch connectives, as well as of other ambiguous words, can be afcertained only by the context. And it is a great fault, in teaching the Clafficks, when children are not inured to give to the conjunctions, which come in their way, that precise meaning, which an intelligent mafter will perceive that the context fixes upon them. For, if the fcholar is permitted invariably to render *autem* (for example) by the Englifh *but*, he muft often lofe the fenfe of his author; and, inftead of being led by the con-

nective to trace out the dependence of sentences, he will be more at a loss, than if that particle had been omitted.

Plutarch, in his Platonick questions, in order to account for that saying of Plato, that language is made up of nouns and verbs, has taken more pains than was necessary, to show, that the noun and the verb are of all parts of speech the most important. His reasoning, however, is rather too much in the way of allegory, to convey clear ideas and full conviction. True it is, as he says, that nouns and verbs may form sentences, independently on prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and adverbs; whereas these last cannot form sentences, nor have any distinct meaning, without nouns and verbs. It is also true, that, (as he proves by a quotation from Demosthenes), by leaving out conjunctions, one may sometimes join the more significant words in closer union, and so give energy to particular passages: and that, from the want of articles, the Latin tongue is not the less perspicuous; nor Homer's Greek the less elegant, for the omission of them. Yet if, in the use of speech, we were to confine ourselves to nouns and attributives; and never have recourse to prepositions, to mark relations of place, nor to conjunctions, to ascertain the dependence of one part of our discourse upon another, I apprehend, that we should be much at a loss, even on common emergencies; and that, in matters of investigation and science, we must be absolutely incapable of accurate expression.

There are two ways of thinking, and, consequently, of speaking, and writing. We sometimes think miscellaneously, (as one may say) when the present thought has little connection with what goes before, or follows. At other times, our ideas proceed in a train; and the present is naturally introduced by the foregoing, and naturally introduces the subsequent. This last is no doubt the most rational, as it is the most methodical, way of thinking; for in this way,

way, many different ideas acquire one tendency, and are all employed for the support and illustration of some one point, and of one another. In the one case, our thoughts resemble a multitude, in which are many individuals, but those are unconnected; and, therefore, though there be great number, there is not proportionable strength. In the other, our thoughts may be compared to an army in order of battle, where the strength is in proportion to the number; because the individuals are mutually dependent on, and supported by, one another; so that the force of each may add to that of all the rest, and all the rest may be said to second the efforts of each individual.

Now Conjunctions are those parts of language, that, by joining sentences in various ways, mark the connections, and various dependencies, of human thought. And therefore, if our thoughts be really connected and mutually dependent, it is most likely (as every man in speaking and writing wishes to do justice to his ideas) that conjunctions will be employed, to make that connection, and those dependencies obvious to ourselves, and to others. And where there is, in any discourse, a remarkable deficiency of connecting particles, it may be presumed, either that there is a want of connection, or that sufficient pains has not been taken to explain it.

The style of the best authors of Greece and Rome abounds in conjunctions and other connecting words. Take any page in Cicero, especially where he speaks in his own person, and in the way of investigation, as in his books of Moral Duties; and you shall hardly see a sentence, that has not in, or near, the beginning, an *autem*, or *enim*, *sed*, or *igitur*, or some other connective: by which we may instantly discover the relation, which the present sentence bears to what went before; as an inference, an objection, an illustration, a continuation, a concession, a condition, or simply as one sentiment subjoined to another by a copulative. The style of  
Seneca,

Seneca, on the other hand, and that of Tacitus, are in this respect deficient. Their sentences are short, and their connectives few; so that the mutual dependence of their thoughts is rather left to the conjecture of the reader, than expressed by the author. And hence, we are told, it was, that the emperor Caligula remarked, (though we can hardly suppose Caligula to have been capable of saying so good a thing) that the style of Seneca was *Arenam sine calce*, Sand without lime; meaning, that matter, or sense, was not wanting, but that there was nothing to cement that matter into one uniform and solid mass.

This uncemented composition has of late become fashionable among the French and their imitators. One of the first who introduced it was Montesquieu, an author of great learning and extraordinary penetration; who, as he resembled Tacitus in genius, seems to have admired his manner, and copied his style. Like him, and like Florus, of whom also he was an admirer (as appears from his *Essay on Taste*) he affects short sentences, in the way of aphorism; full of meaning, indeed, but so concise in the expression as to be frequently ambiguous; and so far from having a regular connection, that their place might often be changed without inconvenience. This in philosophical writing has a disagreeable effect, both upon the memory, and upon the understanding of the reader.

First, upon his memory. Nothing tends more to impress the mind with a distinct idea of a complex object, than a strict and natural connection of the parts. And therefore, when a discourse is not well connected, the sentiments, however just, are easily forgotten; or, if a few be remembered, yet their general scope and tendency, having never been clearly apprehended, is not remembered at all.

And,

And, fecondly, upon his understanding. To read a number of detached thoughts, although it may amufe the fancy, does not fufficiently exercife the rational faculties. Of fuch thoughts, that only which is prefent is attended to; and, if we underftand it, we do all that is required of us. But, when we perufe a regular inveftigation, wherein many fentiments are employed to illuftrate or evince one leading point of doctrine, we muft attend, both to the prefent thought and to that which went before, that we may perceive the connection; we muft alfo compare the feveral ideas together, in order to difcern their agreement or difagreement, as well as the influence of all the premifes in eftablifhing the conclufion. This is a moft wholefome intellectual exercife. It puts all our rational powers in motion, and inures us to a methodical way of thinking and fpeaking: and fo quickens attention, ftrengthens memory, and gives direction and vigour to our inventive powers.

As the fashionable mode of unconnected compofition is lefs improving to the mind of the reader, fo it promotes a habit of inaccuracy and negligence in a writer. One of the greateft difficulties in writing is, to give a right arrangement to the feveral thoughts and parts, whereof a difcourfe is made up: and that arrangement is the beft, in which the feveral parts throw moft light upon one another. But when an author thinks himfelf at liberty to write without connection, he is at little pains to arrange his ideas, but fets them down juft as they occur; fometimes taking up a fubject in the middle, and fometimes at the end; and often quitting one point before he has difcuffed it, and recurring to it again when he ought to be engaged in fomething elfe. In a word, he is apt to be more intent upon the brilliancy of particular thoughts, than upon their coherence: which is not more wife in an author, than it would be in an architect to build a houfe rather of round, fmooth,

and shining pebbles, than of stones of more homely appearance hewn into such figures as would make them easily and firmly incorporate; or, than it would be in any man, rather to thatch his body with gaudy feathers, or splendid rags, than to cover it with one uniform piece of cloth, so shaped and united, as to defend him from the cold, without incumbrance.

Conjunctions, however, are not the only words that connect sentences. Relative pronouns, as I formerly observed\*, do the same; for a relative implies the force both of a pronoun and of a connective. Nay, the union by relatives is rather closer, than that by mere conjunctions. The latter may join two or more sentences in one; but, by the former, several sentences may incorporate in one and the same clause of a sentence. Thus, You see a man *and* he is called Peter, is a sentence consisting of *two* distinct clauses united by the copulative *and*: but, The man *whom* you see is called Peter, is a sentence of *one* clause, and not less comprehensive than the other. Yet relatives are not so useful in language, as conjunctions. The former make speech more concise; the latter make it more explicit. Relatives comprehend the meaning of a pronoun and conjunction *copulative*: conjunctions, while they *couple* sentences, may also express opposition, inference, and many other relations and dependencies.

Till men began to think in a train, and to carry their reasonings to a considerable length, it is not probable, that they would make much use of conjunctions, or of any other connectives. Ignorant people and children generally speak in short and separate sentences. The same thing is true of barbarous nations: and hence uncultivated languages are not well supplied with connecting particles. The Greeks were the greatest reasoners that ever appeared

\* Part II. Chap. i. Sect. 2.



in the world; and their language, accordingly, abounds more than any other in connectives: of which, though we cannot now account for them all, we may be assured that few or none were superfluous.

Conjunctions are not equally necessary in all sorts of writing. In poetry, where great conciseness of phrase is required, and every appearance of formality avoided, too many of them would have a bad effect. In passionate language too, it may be proper to omit them: because it is the nature of violent passion to speak rather in disjointed sentences, than in the way of inference and argument.—Books of aphorism, like the Proverbs of Solomon, have few connectives; because they instruct, not by reasoning, but in detached observations. And narrative will sometimes appear very graceful, when the circumstances are plainly told, with scarce any other conjunction than the simple copulative *and*: which is frequently the case in the historical parts of Scripture.—When narration is full of images or events, the omission of connectives may, by crowding the principal words upon one another, give a sort of picture of hurry and tumult, and so heighten the vivacity of description; as in that line of Lucretius,

Vulneribus, clamore, fuga, terrore, tumultu.

But when facts are to be traced down through their consequences, or upwards to their causes; when the complicated designs of mankind are to be laid open, or conjectures offered concerning them; when the historian argues either for the elucidation of truth, or in order to state the pleas and principles of contending parties; there will be occasion for every species of connective, as much as in philosophy itself. In fact, it is in argument, investigation, and science, where this part of speech is peculiarly and indispensably necessary.

Sometimes, the repetition of a connective, even where it is not necessary, adds weight to a remonstrance, by calling the reader's attention to each individual clause: as, “ *If* there be any virtue, “ and *if* there be any praise, &c. Will you sacrifice liberty, and “ truth, and honour, and conscience, and present convenience, “ and future renown, and eternal felicity, and all to gratify a “ tyrant?”

Grammarians have distinguished the conjunction into Prepositive, Subjunctive, and Common. The first is always the first word of a clause or sentence; as *et, aut, nec*, &c. in Latin; *and, unless, but*, &c. in English. The second is never the first word of a sentence or clause; as *too* in English, and *autem* in Latin. And the third may be either the first, or not the first, as the writer or speaker pleases; as, in English, *however, consequently, therefore*, &c; and, in Latin, *namque, ergo, igitur*, &c. This matter is to be determined, not by the sense of the words, or the nature of the thing, but merely by the fashion of the language.

There are conjunctions, that have an influence on the mood of the following verb; some governing the Indicative, and some the Subjunctive. If this were to depend on the meaning of the connective, and the nature of the mood, we might establish it as a rule, that all Conditional, Hypothetical, Concessive, and Exceptive conjunctions should take the Subjunctive mood, on account of their dependent character, which implies something doubtful or contingent: and that, therefore, we ought to say, “ *If* he come “ he will be welcome,” — not, “ *If* he comes;” “ *Though* thou “ *slay* me, yet will I trust in thee,” — not, “ *Though* thou slayest;” “ *Except* a man *be* born again,” (—not, “ is born”) he cannot see “ the kingdom of God;” “ *Whether* he come as a friend or as a foe, “ I will use him honourably;” — not, “ *Whether* he comes.” Other conjunctions of a more positive, absolute, and independent signification,

nification, ought for the same reason to govern the Indicative: as “ The room is dark *because* the day *is* cloudy: *Since* he *repents*, “ I forgive him: *As* he *is* a worthy man, he may be assured of my “ friendship.”—But this rule is not without exception. It deserves, however, to be remembered; as it is generally attended to by Latin authors; and as in English we can seldom or never go wrong, if we follow it.\*

## S E C T. II.

## Of the A R T I C L E.

**T**HE words, that become significant by being joined to other words, I divided, in the beginning of this chapter, into two classes, the *Necessary*, and the *Useful*. The former, called Connectives, being now considered, it only remains, that I explain the latter, which are known by the name of *Articles*.

The word *article*, *articulus*, † *arthron*, properly signifies *a joint*. It would seem, that the first Grammarians thought there was something of a joining power in the words of this order. But, if they thought so, they were mistaken. The article is no connective. It is a Definitive: being used for the purpose of defining, ascertaining, or limiting, the signification of those words to which it is prefixed. Perhaps, however, they may have given it this name, with a view to some metaphorical allusion.

In order to discover its use, we must recollect, that all nouns, proper names excepted, are general terms, or common appella-

\* See above, page 413.

† ἀρθρον.

tives. The word *mountain* is equally applicable to all mountains, and the word *man* to all men. Every vessel of a certain size and form, which is made for sailing, may be called *ship*: and the terms *valour*, *bounty*, *wisdom*, belong to every person, who is valiant, bountiful, wise.

But, though it is true, of the *names* of things, that they are of *general* meaning, things themselves are all *individuals*. No one man is either less or more than one; and every man has peculiarities, whereby he may be distinguished from all others.

How, then, are we to reconcile the universality of names with the individuality of things? In other words: when we make use of a common appellation, as *man*, *house*, *mountain*, what method do we take to intimate, that we speak of one, and not of many; of an individual, and not of a species? There are several ways of doing this: and, particularly, it may be done by Articles, or Definitives.

For example: I see an animated being, which has no proper name, or of whose proper name I am ignorant. In speaking of it, therefore, I must refer it to its species, and call it *man*, *dog*, *horse*, or the like; or, if I know not the species, I refer it to its genus, and call it *animal*. But this animated being is itself neither a genus, nor a species; it is an individual: and therefore, in speaking of it, so as to mark its individuality, I call it *a horse*, *a man*, *a dog*, *an animal*: which intimates, that I speak of one, and not of many; of an individual being, and not of a class of beings. This article, therefore, *A* or *An*, has the same signification nearly with the numerical word *one*. And accordingly, in French and Italian, the same word that denotes unity is also the article of which I now speak. Nay, in some of the dialects of old English, this seems to have been the case; for *an* is the same with *one* in the Saxon; and the vulgar in Scotland still use *a* (pronouncing it, as in the word

*name*) in the sense of *one*; as *a day*, one day, “*a morning* I was “early out,” for, one morning.—Now observe, that, when it is said, I see a man, I see an animal, the *a* or *an*, though it ascertains the individuality, gives no further intimation concerning the thing spoken of. It is therefore called the *Indefinite article*.

Again: I see a certain animal, which I never saw before, or of which, though I may know to what species it belongs, I have no previous acquaintance; and I say, I see *an* elephant, *a* dwarf, *a* bear, &c. Next day, the same animal comes again in view; and I say, recognizing it as the same, There is *the* elephant, *the* dwarf, *the* bear: changing the former indefinite article into another, which not only intimates individuality, but also implies previous acquaintance. This, from its power of ascertaining some one individual, in preference to others of the same species, is called the *Definite article*: and it will appear in the sequel to be much more *useful* than the other.

We have, therefore, in English, two articles or definitives, *A* or *An*, and *The*: the former applicable to *any one* of a kind or sort; the other used for the purpose of distinguishing *some particular one*. In French and Italian there are two correspondent articles.

In Greek, there is no indefinite article; the noun without an article having the same meaning with our indefinite article prefixed to a noun; as \* *anér*, a man: but there is a definite article † *ho*, *hè*, *to*, which is for the most part of the same import with our English *the*; as ‡ *ho anér*, the man.

In the Hebrew, as in Greek, there is no indefinite article; but there is a definite article, which they prefix to the noun so as to make one word with it; and which, like the English article, has no distinction of gender or number.

\* *άνηρ*.† *ὁ, ἡ, τὸ*.‡ *ὁ ἀνήρ*.

In the Erse or Gaelick tongue, they have also a definite, but no indefinite, article. And the use of the article seems to have been pretty general in all the primitive tongues of the north of Europe, the Gothick, and Teutonick, as well as the Celtick; from which we may account for the prevalence of these little words in our modern tongues. For it is remarkable, that, though all the languages derived from the Latin have articles, yet the Latin itself has none. Whence then did they get theirs? I answer, from those northern nations who overturned the empire of Rome, and who, though they in part adopted the language of the vanquished Romans, did also introduce into it a great variety of their own words and idioms.

That which is very eminent is supposed to be generally known. Hence the definite article may convey an idea of eminence, as well as of previous acquaintance. *A king* is any king; but *the king* is that person whom we acknowledge for our sovereign. So when we say simply, the kingdom, the nation, the government, we of Great Britain mean the British government, nation, kingdom, &c.

Sometimes we denote eminence by omitting the article: we say, a member of parliament; an act of parliament; rather than, of *the parliament*. In this case, the thing spoken of is so very eminent, that it needs no article to make it more so: and besides, a parliament, in our sense of the word, is an institution peculiar to British policy. The twelve French Parliaments are rather courts of justice than legislative assemblies. And, among the vulgar of North Britain, whose language abounds in French idioms, the same idea appears to be still annexed to the term: for they speak of appealing *to the British parliament* from a sentence of the Court of Session; though they know, that the appeal is made, not to the Parliament, (in the English sense of the word) but to the House of Lords.

In

In Greek too, as in English, the article is a mark of eminence : \* *ho poiētēs*, the poet, is used for Homer, the greatest of poets ; and † *ho stageirītēs*, the Stagyrite, for Aristotle, who was the most famous of all the natives of the city Stagyra.

That which is nearly connected with us, or which from its vicinity we have been long acquainted with, becomes eminent in our eyes, even though, in itself, and compared with other things of the same kind, it be of no particular importance. One who lives near a very little town speaks of it by the name of *the town*. Every clergyman within his own parish is called *the minister* or *the parson* ; and if in a village there be only one merchant or one smith, his neighbours think they distinguish him sufficiently, by calling him *the smith* or *the merchant*. A tree, a rock, a hill, a river, a meadow, may be spoken of in the same manner, with the same emphasis. He is not returned from *the hill* : he is bathing in *the river* : I saw him on the top of *the rock* : Will you take a walk in *the meadow* ? A branch is blown down from *the tree*. In these examples, the definite article is used ; because the thing spoken of, being in the neighbourhood, is well known, and a matter of some importance to the people who are acquainted with it.

That we may perceive, yet more clearly, the significancy of the articles, let us put the one for the other, and mark the consequence. When it is said, that “ the ancestors of the present Royal Family were kings in England three hundred years before *the* Conqueror,” the sense is clear ; as every body knows, that the person here spoken of by the name of *the conqueror* is William duke of Normandy, who subdued England about seven hundred years ago. But if we say, that “ the ancestors of the Royal Family were kings in England three hundred years before *a* conqueror,”

\* ὁ ποιητής.

† ὁ σταγειρίτης.

we speak nonsense.—Again, when it is said, that “health is *a* most desirable thing,” there is no man who will not acquiesce in the proposition; which only means that health is *one* of those things that are to be very much desired. But, take the other article, and say, “Health is *the* most desirable thing,” and you change it from true to false: for this would imply, that nothing is so desirable as health; which is very wide of the truth; virtue, and a good conscience, being of infinitely greater value.—Moreover, if, instead of “Man is born to trouble,” we say “*A* man is born to trouble,” there is no material change in the sense; only the former is more solemn, perhaps because it is more concise: and here, by the by, we may see, that the indefinite article is sometimes of no great use. But if we say, “*The* man is born to trouble,” the maxim is no longer general; some one particular man is hinted at; and they to whom we speak would naturally ask, What man?

The learned Bishop Lowth has shown, in his excellent English grammar, that, in some instances, our translation of the New Testament has misrepresented the sense of the original Greek, by not attending to the article. “When the Spirit of truth is come,” says the translation, “he will guide you into *all truth* :” a promise, or a prophecy, which was not fulfilled by the event; for, after the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it is probable, that the Apostles remained ignorant of many truths; indeed, it is not possible, that they could know every thing. But in the Greek of this passage we have an article (omitted in the Translation) which gives a very different sense:—“he will guide you into *all the truth* ;” \* that is, into all Evangelical (or Christian) truths, a prediction, which the event did fully justify.—Take another instance. When a Roman Centurion perceived the miraculous cir-

\* Εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν ἀληθειαν.

cumstances;



cumstances that accompanied the Crucifixion, our Bible informs us, that he said, “ Truly this was *the Son* of God :” which would imply, what is not likely, that this centurion was acquainted with our Saviour’s history and doctrines, and particularly knew, that he called himself the Son of God, in a peculiar and incommunicable sense. But the Greek has not this article ; and should therefore have been rendered, “ Truly this was *a son* of God,” \* or an extraordinary person, and superior to a mere man : a remark, which even heathens, though ignorant of our Saviour’s history, might reasonably make, on seeing the prodigies of earthquake and darkness that accompanied his last suffering.

Sometimes, however, our two articles do not differ so widely in signification. Thus, we may say, “ It is true as *the* proverb, “ declares ;” or, “ it is true as *a* proverb, or as *a certain* proverb “ declares, that,” &c : and the change of the article does not make any material change in the sense. In like manner we say, “ That “ heaven smiles at the perjury of lovers, is a pernicious maxim of “ *the poet* ;” where the two last words allude, not to Homer, or Virgil, or any other poet of the first rank, but to Ovid, who was of an inferior order. And this sentence would lose nothing of its signification, if we were to substitute the other article, and say, “ *A poet* has delivered a pernicious maxim, when he affirms, that “ heaven smiles at the perjury of lovers.”—A similar idiom may be found in Greek. Thus Aristotle : “ Change is the sweetest of all

\* Or rather, *a son of a God* ; or, which is the same thing here, *the son of a God*, as Dr. Campbell renders it, in the work which he is now preparing for the press. See above, Chap. II ; conclusion of Sect. i. The expression in Greek is  $\text{ὁ υἱος}$ , without any article ; so that both words are equally indefinite. The phrase  $\text{ὁ υἱος τοῦ Θεοῦ}$ , which occurs sometimes, is properly *a son of God*. But the title which our Saviour takes to himself, and which is given him by his Apostles, is always in the Gospel  $\text{ὁ υἱος τοῦ Θεοῦ}$ , *the Son of the (true) God*.

“ things, according to *the poet* \*;” where *the poet* signifies, not Homer, but Euripides; an author of great merit, but by no means equal to Homer, even in Aristotle’s judgment. Now if the Greek article had been omitted, “ Change is the sweetest of all things, as *a poet* says,” it is plain, that the sentence would have had the same meaning.

In some cases, the definite article conveys a peculiar sense. *A speaker* is any man who speaks; but *the Speaker* is the person who presides in the House of Commons. *An advocate*, in Scotland, is any one who is entitled to plead in the higher courts of justice; but *the advocate* is he, whose office corresponds to that which in England is held by the King’s Attorney General. *A council* is any assembly of men met in consultation; but *the council* is, according to the English idiom, the King’s Privy Council. So, in Greek, † *antbrōpos* is *a man*, but *ho antbrōpos* is the publick executioner; ‡ *ploion* is *a ship*, but *to ploion* is that particular ship, which the Athenians sent every year, on a religious embassy, to Delos.

Words, that are sufficiently definite in themselves, stand in no need of the article to make them more so. Such are the pronouns, *I, thou, he, she, and it*; to which, accordingly, the article is never prefixed, either in Greek, or in English ‖. And such, one would think, must those proper names be, which distinguish one individual from all others. And it is true, that, in many languages, the proper names of men and women appear without any article.

\* Μεταβολη δε παντων γλυκυτατον, κατα τον ποιητην. Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. 7.

† ανθρωπος, ο ανθρωπος.

‡ πλοιον, το πλοιον.

‖ In passages, like the following from Shakspeare,

Lady, you are *the* cruellest *she* alive —

*The* fair, *the* chaste, *the* unexpressive *she* —

*The shees* of Italy will not betray —

the word *She* is not pronominal, but a noun of the same import with *woman*, or *lady*.

But in Greek it is not always so: Socrates is sometimes called \* *ho Sókratês*; and his wife, *hê Xanthippê*. Most grammarians consider this as a redundancy in the Greek; or, at best, as an expedient to mark the gender.

The Author of an Essay *On the origin and progress of language* affirms, that the Greeks prefixed the article to the proper names, either of persons who were eminent; or of such persons, whether eminent or not, whose names had been formerly mentioned in the discourse: and that, therefore, *ho Sókratês* signifies, either *the famous Socrates*, or *the abovementioned Socrates*. This once appeared to me so plausible, that I adopted it; confiding in the accuracy and erudition of the Author; both which I know to be very great. But some Greek passages occurring to my memory first made me doubtful: and, on looking a little into books with this particular view, I was satisfied, that the learned writer is mistaken. See the introductory paragraph of the *Anabasis* of Xenophon; in which, without the article, Darius is named three several times, Parysatis twice or thrice, and Artaxerxes as often. See also the beginning of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*; where Socrates himself is mentioned by name twelve times (if I mistake not) without the article, before he is once mentioned with it. I am now, therefore, convinced, that those Grammarians are in the right, who consider the Greek article, when prefixed to proper names of men and women, as a pleonasm, or as an expedient, in certain cases, to clear the sense, ascertain the gender, or improve the harmony.

The Italians prefix the definite article to some of their most celebrated names; as *Il Dante*, *Il Petrarca*, *Il Tasso*; and even to famous singers and fiddlers, as *La Frasi*, *Il Senesino*, *Il Tartini*: in which they have of late been imitated by some of the people of London, who, speaking of favourite musicians, say, *The Min-*

\* ὁ σωκρατης, ἡ ξανθιππη.

gotti, *the* Gabrielli, &c; but this is affectation, and suits not the idiom of the English tongue.—Another fashion, not unlike this, has been lately introduced, which, though also contrary to idiom, will probably establish itself in the language, as it is now generally adopted: “I was last night in company with *a* Mr. Such-a-one, “who told us some good stories.” The indefinite article is here put for the word *one*; and the meaning is, that the person is not known, or very little known, to those who speak of him in this manner.

To the proper names of some great natural objects, as mountains and rivers, we prefix the definite article in English, as they also do in French; and say, *the* Alps, *the* Grampians, *the* Andes, *the* Thames, *the* Tiber, *the* Dee: but to single mountains however large we do not prefix it; we say, Etna, Atlas, Lebanon, Olympus, Morven, not *the* Etna, *the* Atlas, &c.—In France, they distinguish the names of certain countries by the definite article; as *la France*, *l'Angleterre*, *l'Espagne*; but this is not done in English. Indeed our way of applying the article differs in many respects from theirs: but I cannot enter into particulars, without quitting the tract of Universal Grammar.

When a proper name belongs to several persons, it may become a sort of common appellative, and take the article; as *the* Cæsars, *the* Gordons, *the* Howards. And the article may also be applied to distinguish one person from another of the same name; as “*The* Pliny, who wrote the Natural History, is not *the* Pliny who composed the panegyrick on Trajan.” In this use, the definite article coincides nearly in sense with the pronominal article *that*. And this same pronoun *that* we sometimes use for the definite article.

Thus I presume it is used in a very solemn passage of Scripture; where Jehovah, appearing in the burning bush to Moses, declares his name in these words, “I am *that* I AM;” that is, “I am *the* “I AM;”

“ I AM ;” or “ I am *the great* I AM :” I am he, who alone possesses perfect and independent existence. This example I the rather take notice of, because a learned author insinuates, that there is no sense in it, as it stands in the English Bible; and contends, that it should have been rendered, as in the Greek of the Septuagint; “ I am the being,” or rather, “ I am he who is.” \* But it seems to me, that in our version the passage is not less significant. Indeed; if we pronounce it, as is commonly done, “ I *am* that I *am*,” laying the emphasis on the two verbs, and without any emphasis on the pronominal article *that*, it will not appear to have any grammatical propriety. But let an emphasis be laid on *that*, which is here a most emphatical word; and another emphasis on the concluding words I AM, which are still more emphatical, because they are the name by which the Deity is here pleased to make himself known; and the passage will be found to be both intelligible and sublime.—The same emphatical use of the pronoun *that* occurs in other parts of the English Bible. “ Art thou *that* my Lord Elijah ?” says Ahab’s messenger to the Prophet: that is, Art thou the *great* or the *celebrated* Lord Elijah? “ This is *that* king Ahaz;” says the historian, after specifying some of his wicked actions: This is the king Ahaz so *notorious* for his impiety. †

Articles being so important, it may be doubted whether I express myself properly, when I affirm, that they are useful in language; but not necessary; and whether the Latin tongue, which is supposed to have no article, must not, on that account, be very deficient in both perspicuity and energy. This matter deserves to be considered.

It is true, that many learned men have thought, that the want of an article is a great deficiency in the Latin tongue: and some modern authors have gone so far as to say, that this alone makes it improper for philosophy. Yet Quintilian, who understood Greek

\* Εγω ειμι ο ων.

†. 1 Kings xviii. 7. 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.

and Latin better, as I suppose, than any modern can pretend to do, and who also appears to have been a proficient in philosophy, declares, that the Latin tongue has no need of articles; and Scaliger, one of the most learned men and ablest grammarians of latter times, is of the same opinion: for that, by means of *ipse* and *ille*, and some other pronouns, every thing of real importance, which the Greek article can express, may be signified in Latin. And I think they are right. If, for example, I am desired to translate those words of Scripture, in which the article is indeed most emphatical, “And Nathan said unto David, Thou art *the* man:” what is easier than to say, *Et dixit Nathan Davidi, Tu es ille homo*; or, more simply, *Tu es ille*; or, more simply still, for the context would bear it, *Tu es?*—“I am *that* I AM,” may be rendered as emphatically in Latin, as in English or Greek, *Ego sum ille* *Ego sum*; or, *Ego sum ille cui nomen EGO SUM*.

The first verse of St. John’s Gospel, in which the articles are very significant, and which we translate exactly and literally from the Greek, “In the beginning was *the* Word, and *the* Word was with God, and *the* Word was God,” may no doubt be rendered ambiguously in Latin thus, *In principio fuit Verbum, et Verbum fuit apud Deum, et Verbum fuit Deus*\*. For this might be so turned into English, as to produce nonsense and blasphemy. But that would be the fault, not of the language, but of the translator. For one, who understands Greek and Latin, and is attentive to the meaning, and anxious to preserve it, would render the verse, as in the Port Royal Greek Grammar it is rendered, *In principio erat Verbum illud, et Verbum illud erat apud Deum, et illud Verbum erat Deus*:—which is as expressive, as either the English, or the Greek. If it be said, that this Latin is not elegant, on account of the repetition of the pronoun; I answer, first, that elegance is not to be expected in a translation so exactly literal; and, secondly,

\* Castalio’s translation of this verse is not much better.

that in a sentiment of such importance, and which human wisdom could never have discovered, accuracy of expression is more requisite, than Classical purity. Had St. John written in Latin, he would have delivered this doctrine with equal energy, and probably with more elegance: which every person, who is acquainted with that language, knows might easily be done, if one is not limited to any particular phraseology.

When words are *materially* taken; that is, when they appear in a discourse as words only, and not as significant of any idea; as when we say, “The word *Boisterous* has a harsh sound;”—the article is useful in Greek, to indicate their nature. And I observe, that verbal criticks often introduce the Greek article in their Latin annotations, in order to point out such words when they occur: as, “Deest τὸ *est* in manuscriptis quibusdam, THE *est* is wanting “in some manuscripts.” But this is an affectation, for which there is not the least necessity. “In Manuscriptis quibusdam deest “ILLUD *est*,” is good Latin, and perfectly intelligible. Tully himself has said, “Quid enim est hoc ipsum *diu*?”

I deny not, that, in such Greek books as the Analyticks and Metaphysicks of Aristotle, there may be points of doctrine, which the Roman language, from its want of an article, cannot express, without either adopting some of the Greek terms, or giving a licence to barbarous latinity. But this is no material grievance. Many things are delivered in those books, as maxims of universal science, which are only grammatical observations on particular Greek words; and which, therefore, cannot be transplanted into a foreign tongue, unless those Greek words are transplanted along with them: even as, in an English grammar of the Latin language, you cannot speak so as to be understood, unless you illustrate what you say by Latin examples.—Besides, when we borrow arts or sciences from another nation, we must always borrow something of their native phraseology. Thus, in fortification, we use many French, in

musick many Italian, and in rhetoric and medicine many Greek, words. And thus, if we were to write the History of England in Latin, we should be obliged to coin many words that were never known in antient Rome; in order to express those peculiarities of Government and manners, of which the Romans could not speak, because they had no idea; as parliament, chancery, peers, commons, guns, bayonets, cannon, &c.—In fact, Aristotle's metaphysical writings seem never to have been in any repute among the Romans of the Claffick ages. That intelligent people adopted what was valuable in the Greek philosophy: but those verbal subtleties and speculations, that had nothing to do with business, or the conduct of life, they neglected; and I think with good reason.

That articles are not of necessary use, even in Greek, may appear from this, that the Grecian poets, especially Homer, frequently omit them: though I know not, whether there be extant an author more perspicuous than Homer, notwithstanding his great antiquity. To which I may add, that, in the Attick dialect, articles are either used or omitted, according as they are thought to be more or less ornamental in discourse.—In English, the definite article may often be dropped, without any ambiguity; as, “ Horse  
“ and man fell to the ground,” for *the* horse, and *the* man. This omission is common in our burlesque poems; as, “ And pulpit,  
“ drum ecclesiastick, Was beat with fist instead of a stick:” that is, *the* pulpit was beat with *the* fist. And of so little account is our indefinite article, that it is never prefixed to nouns of the plural number: we say, “ *A* man is coming,” if there be but one; but, if more than one, we say, “ *Men* are coming.” The French, indeed, give a plural to their indefinite article; *un homme*, a man, *des hommes*, men, or some men: but surely, this plural cannot in that, or in any, language be necessary, when in our own we hardly perceive that it is wanting.



Yet, that there are in Latin no ambiguities arising from the want of an article, I will not affirm. In the beginning of the *Eneid*, Juno, calling to mind those manifold grievances, which made her resolve upon the destruction of the Trojan fleet, exclaims,

Pallasine exurere classem

Argivum, atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto!

These words may bear two interpretations: Could Pallas burn *the* Grecian fleet! or, Could Pallas burn *a* Grecian fleet! The last is the true one; for the whole Grecian fleet was not burned by Pallas, but that squadron only, which belonged to Ajax the son of Oileus. Now here is an ambiguity, which Virgil might easily have avoided, if he had written in a language that either had an indefinite article, like the English, or, like the Greek, could have conveyed an indefinite sense by omitting the article. But of so little importance is this ambiguity, that I doubt whether the poet would have thought it worth his while to guard against it; as no person, who knows any thing of the poetical history, could be at a loss to discover the meaning. Many things occur both in speech and in writing, which they only can understand, who attend to what goes before, and to what comes after. And if we be not in some measure prepared for the study of an author, by a little previous acquaintance with his subject, we must in the clearest language find obscurity, especially in the beginning of a work. As to the obscurity in question, it is certain, that, without the help of any article, and by the native powers of the Latin tongue, Virgil could have avoided it; as it is probable he would, if he had thought it a blemish.

I would not insinuate, that the Latin is as comprehensive a language as the Greek. Both Lucretius and Cicero complain, that on the subject of philosophy it is deficient. But this, I presume, is not owing to the want of an article; nor do they say, that it is: but to some other circumstances; whereof I need only mention this one; that the Latin tongue was completely formed and polished,

before any attempt was made to write philosophy in it. So that, when Cicero introduced the Greek learning, he was obliged to coin several words, which, notwithstanding his authority, never became current; and often to express the Greek idea by a Greek word, because he could not find a Latin one of the same signification.

But, whatever we determine in regard to the present question, this at least must be granted; that if, from its want of articles, the Latin tongue be less simple, and sometimes less perspicuous, than the Greek or English, it is in general more concise than either. By the absence of these little words, the more important parts of the expression are permitted to have a closer coherence. And therefore, though the Latin may be less adapted to the abstruser philosophy, it is, however, as susceptible, as even the Greek itself, of all the charms of poetical, historical, and oratorical composition.

The great excellence of the Greek is simplicity; and that power, which it possesses unrivalled, of adapting itself so easily to every subject, and every science. In Homer and Isocrates, it may be thought more *harmonious*, than any other language: but I can hardly admit, that in this respect the Latin is inferior, when modulated by Cicero and Virgil. Its dual number, optative mood, middle verb, second aorist, and second future, from which some would vainly persuade themselves that it derives part of its pre-eminence, I must, till I see them better explained than they have hitherto been, consider as superfluities: which make it more difficult, indeed, in the acquisition, and somewhat more various in the sound, but contribute nothing to its significancy. Its preterperfect, aorist, and article, give it some advantage over the Latin; but the English, and other modern languages, have also an article, aorist, and preterperfect. In fact, Grammarians seem to me to speak rashly, when they call every tongue barbarous, except the Greek and Roman. The language of such men as Milton, Addison; Boileau, Tasso, and Metastasio, cannot be barbarous. Else how comes it, that the greatest masters of Classick learning find it so

difficult to do justice to those authors by translation. If Dobson's *Paradisus Amissus*, the exactest poetical version, perhaps, that ever was written \*, does not deserve to be called barbarous, I should be glad to know, in what sense of the word, or with what propriety, the original *Paradise Lost* can be so called. — But English is not so elegant as Latin and Greek. Be it so. Yet, would it not be hard to call one a barbarian, merely because one has not reached the summit of politeness? The less elegant a language is in its structure, the more merit have they who write elegantly in it. If St. Paul's Cathedral were of Parian marble, instead of Portland stone, its appearance might be more splendid; but the sublime imagination of Sir Christopher Wren would not be more conspicuous.

It was said, that in English the indefinite article is not prefixed to nouns of the plural. It should have been added, that when an English plural noun is a *Collective*, that is, when by referring many, or more than one, to a class, it bestows unity upon them, it may then assume the indefinite article. Thus we say, not only *a dozen*, *a score*, *a hundred*, but also *a few*, and *a great many*; *a many* is found in Shakspeare. *An eight days* is old English; for it occurs in the Bible, and is still a vulgar idiom in Scotland. It was once, no doubt, considered as a collective; like the word *fort-night* or *fourteen-night*. But this remark, like many others in the discourse, belongs not to Universal Grammar.

And now, to conclude. It appears, that, to constitute a language as perfect as the Latin, NINE sorts of words, or parts of speech, are necessary: the Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Participle, Verb, Adverb, Interjection, Preposition, and Conjunction. The Latin Grammarians, indeed, enumerate only eight; because they improperly refer Nouns and Adjectives to the same class. In

\* I once thought. (see the Conclusion of an Essay on the Usefulness of Classical Learning) that Homer was of all poets the most fortunate in a Translator. I had not then seen Dobson's incomparable performance: and the English *Eschylus*, by my very learned, ingenious, and worthy Friend, the Rev. Mr. Potter, was not then published.

Greek, English, Italian, French, Hebrew, and many other languages, there are TEN parts of speech: the Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Participle, Verb, Adverb, Interjection, Preposition, Conjunction, and Article.

According to Aristotle, the parts of speech are four: the Article, Name, Verb, and Connective. This is not so inaccurate, as at first sight it may seem to be: for we may suppose, that to the Name he refers both the Noun, and its representative the Pronoun; to the Verb, (or Attributive), the Adjective, Participle, Verb (strictly so called) and Adverb, and consequently the Interjection; and, to the Connective, both the Conjunction and the Preposition. Yet I do not think this division accurate. For there are many Adverbs, those of time and place, for example, which cannot by any just reasoning be proved to belong to the class of Attributives; and the same thing is true of the Interjections.

Plato reduces all the parts of speech to two, the Noun and the Verb: which his followers endeavour to vindicate, by urging, that every word must denote, either a Substance, or the Attribute of a Substance; that by the Noun, and Pronoun, Substances are signified, as Attributes are by the Attributive; and that Attributives are spoken of, by the antient Grammarians, under the general denomination of Verb. But neither is this satisfactory. For there are many words in language, as articles and connectives, which in themselves cannot be said to signify either Substance or Attribute; because, when taken separately, they signify nothing at all.

If it be asked, What sorts of words are most, and what least, necessary; the following answer may be collected from what has been evinced in the course of this long investigation. The Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Participle, Adjective, Preposition, and Conjunction, seem to be essential to language: the Article, Interjection, and most of the Adverbs, are rather to be called useful, than necessary, Parts of Speech.

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On Fable and Romance.

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*General remarks on Ancient and Oriental Prose Fable. — Modern Prose Fable, divided into, I. The HISTORICAL ALLEGORY. Argenis. John Bull. II. The RELIGIOUS AND MORAL ALLEGORY. Pilgrim's Progress. Gulliver's Travels. Tale of a Tub. III. The POETICAL PROSE FABLE, or ROMANCE. — Character of the nations, who introduced the Feudal Government and Manners. — Crusades. — Chivalry. — Alterations in the Feudal System. — Rise of Modern Literature. — Knight-Errantry proscribed by law; and finally extirpated by the publication of Don Quixote. — Importance of that work. — Death and character of the OLD ROMANCE. — The NEW ROMANCE. — 1. Serious, and Historically arranged. Robinson Crusoe. 2. Serious, and Poetically arranged. Sir Charles Grandison. Clarissa. 3. Comick, and Historically arranged. Gil Blas. Roderick Random, &c. 4. Comick, and Poetically arranged. Joseph Andrews. Tom Jones. Amelia. — Conclusion.*

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## On Fable and Romance.

**T**HE love of Truth is natural to man ; and adherence to it, his indispensable duty. But to frame a fabulous narrative, for the purpose of instruction or of harmless amusement, is no breach of veracity, unless one were to obtrude it on the world for truth. The fabulist and the novel-writer deceive nobody ; because, though they study to make their inventions probable, they do not even pretend that they are true : at least, what they may pretend in this way is considered only as words of course, to which nobody pays any regard. Fabulous narrative has accordingly been common in all ages of the world, and practised by teachers of the most respectable character.

It is owing, no doubt, to the weakness of human nature, that fable should ever have been found a necessary, or a convenient, vehicle for truth. But we must take human nature as it is : and, if a rude multitude cannot readily comprehend a moral or political doctrine, which they need to be instructed in, it may be as allowable, to illustrate that doctrine by a fable, in order to make them attend, and understand it, as it is for a physician to strengthen a weak stomach with cordials, in order to prepare it for the business of digestion. Such was the design of Jotham's parable of the trees chusing a king, in the ninth chapter of the book of Judges : and such that famous apologue, of a contention between the parts of the human body, by which Menenius Agrippa satisfied the people of Rome, that the welfare of the state depended on the union and good agreement of the several members of it. In fact, the common people are not well qualified for argument. A short and pithy proverb, which is easily remembered ; or little tales, that

appeal as it were to their senses, weigh more with them than demonstration.

We need not wonder, then, to find, that, in antient times, moral precepts were often delivered in the way of proverb or aphorism, and enforced and exemplified by fictitious narrative. Of those fables that are ascribed to Esop, some are no doubt modern, but others bear the stamp of antiquity. And nothing can be better contrived, than many of them are, for the purpose of impressing moral truth upon the memory, as well as the understanding. The disappointment, that frequently attends an excessive desire of accumulation, is finely exemplified in the fable of the dog and his shadow; and the ruinous and ridiculous nature of ambition is with equal energy illustrated in that of the frog and the ox. These little allegories we are apt to undervalue, because we learned them at school; but they are not for that reason the less valuable. We ought to prize them as monuments of antient wisdom, which have long contributed to the amusement and instruction of mankind, and are entitled to applause, on account of the propriety of the invention.

The Greek apologues ascribed to Esop, and the Latin ones of Phedrus, are masterpieces in this way of writing; and have hardly been equalled by the best of our modern fabulists. They are (at least many of them are, for some are trifling) remarkable for the simplicity of the style; and for the attention, which their authors have generally given, to the nature of the animals, and other things, that are introduced as agents and speakers. For in most of the modern fables, invented by Gay, La Fontaine, L'Estrangé, Poggio, and others, the contrivance is less natural; and the language, though simple, is quaint, and full of witticism. That a dog should snap at the shadow of a dog, and by so doing lose the piece of flesh that was in his own mouth, is suitable to the character of the animal, and is indeed a very probable story: but that an



elephant should converse with a bookfeller about Greek authors, or a hare intreat a calf to carry her off on his back, and save her from the hounds, is a fiction wherein no regard is had to the nature of things. In this, as in the higher, sorts of fable, it is right to adhere, as much as may be, to probability. Brute animals, and vegetables too, may be allowed to speak and think: this indulgence is granted, from the necessity of the case; for, without it, their adventures could neither improve nor entertain us: but, with this exception, nature should not be violated; nor the properties of one animal or vegetable ascribed to a different one. Frogs have been seen inflated with air, at least, if not with pride; dogs may swim rivers; a man might take a frozen viper into his bosom, and be bit to death for his imprudence; a fox might play with a tragedian's headpiece; a lamb and a wolf might drink of the same brook, and the former lose his life on the occasion: but who ever heard of an elephant reading Greek, or a hare riding on the back of a calf?

The wisdom of antiquity was not satisfied with conveying short lessons of morality in these apologues, or little tales. The poets entered upon a more extensive field of fable; in order to convey a more refined species of instruction, and to please by a more exquisite invention, and a higher probability. But I confine myself at present to prose fable.

One of the first specimens of Fabulous History, that appeared in these western parts of the world, is the *Cyropedia* of Xenophon. This work, however, we are not to consider as of the nature of Romance; for the outlines of the story are true. But the author takes the liberty to feign many incidents; that he may set in a variety of lights the character of Cyrus, whom he meant to exhibit as the model of a great and good prince. The work is very elegant and entertaining, and abounds in moral, political, and military knowledge. It is, nevertheless, to be regretted, that we have no certain rule for distinguishing what is historical in it, from what

is fabulous. The history of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian empire, who has the honour to be mentioned by name in the Old Testament, is surely worth knowing. Yet we are much in the dark in regard to it. The account given of him by Herodotus differs greatly from Xenophon's; and in many instances we know not which to prefer. It is observable however, that Xenophon's description of the manner in which Cyrus took Babylon, by turning aside the course of the Euphrates, and entering, through the empty channel, under the walls of the city, agrees very well with several intimations of that event, which we find in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel.

Allegorical Fables were not unknown in the days of Xenophon. The Table, or Picture, of Cebes the Theban was written about this time; as well as the Story of Hercules conversing with Virtue and Vice, and preferring the honours promised by the former to the pleasures offered by the latter. Cebes's Picture of human life excels in accuracy of description, justness of allegory, and a sweet simplicity of style. The fable of Hercules, as originally written by Prodicus, is lost, and seems not to have been extant in the time of Cicero\*; but Xenophon gives a full and elegant abstract of it, in the beginning of his second book of *Memorabilia*.

Excepting some Allegorical fables scattered up and down in Plato, I do not recollect, among the Classick productions of Greece and Rome, any other remarkable specimen of prose fable: for the heathen mythology, though full of allegories, I am not to touch upon in this place, on account of its connection with poetry; and because my chief purpose is, to inquire into the origin and nature of the Modern Romance.

But, first, it may be proper to observe, that the Oriental nations have long been famous for fabulous narrative. The indolence peculiar to the genial climates of Asia, and the luxurious life which

\* Cicero de Officiis. Lib. i. cap. 32.

the kings and other great men, of those countries, lead in their feraglios, have made them seek for this sort of amusement, and set a high value upon it. When an Eastern prince happens to be idle, as he commonly is, and at a loss for expedients to kill the time, he commands his Grand Visir, or his favourite, to tell him stories. Being ignorant, and consequently credulous; having no passion for moral improvement, and little knowledge of nature; he does not desire, that they should be probable, or of an instructive tendency: it is enough if they be astonishing. And hence it is, no doubt, that those oriental tales are so extravagant. Every thing is carried on by enchantment and prodigy; by fairies, genii, and demons, and wooden horses, which, on turning a peg, fly through the air with inconceivable swiftness.

Another thing remarkable in these eastern tales, is, that their authors expatiate, with peculiar delight, in the description of magnificence; rich robes, gaudy furniture, sumptuous entertainments, and palaces shining in gold, or sparkling with diamonds. This too is conformable to the character and circumstances of the people. Their great men, whose taste has never been improved by studying the *simplicity* of nature and art, pique themselves chiefly on the *splendour* of their equipage, and the vast quantities of gold, jewels, and curious things, which they can heap together in their repositories.

The greatest, indeed the only, collection, that I am acquainted with, of Oriental fables, is the *Thousand and one tales*, commonly called *The Arabian Nights Entertainment*. This book, as we have it, is the work of Mons. Galland of the French Academy, who is said to have translated it from the Arabick original. But whether the tales be really Arabick, or invented by Mons. Galland, I have never been able to learn with certainty. If they be Oriental, they are translated with unwarrantable latitude; for the whole tenor of the style is in the French mode: and the Caliph of Bagdat; and

the Emperor of China, are address'd in the same terms of ceremony, which are usual at the court of France. But this, though in my opinion it takes away from the value of the book, because I wish to see Eastern manners in an Eastern tale, is no proof, that the whole work is by M. Galland: for the French are so devoted to their own ceremonies, that they cannot endure any other; and seldom fail to season their translations, even of the gravest and most antient authors, with the fashionable forms of Parisian civility.

As the Arabian Nights Entertainment is a book which most young people in this country are acquainted with, I need not draw any character of it, or remark that it exactly answers the account already given of Oriental fable. There is in it great luxury of description, without any elegance; and great variety of invention, but nothing that elevates the mind, or touches the heart. All is wonderful and incredible; and the astonishment of the reader is more aimed at, than his improvement either in morality, or in the knowledge of nature. Two things, however, there are, which deserve commendation, and may entitle it to one perusal. It conveys a pretty just idea of the government, and of some of the customs, of those eastern nations; and there is somewhere in it a story of a barber and his six brothers, that contains many good strokes of satire and comick description. I may add, that the character of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid is well drawn; and that the story of forty thieves destroyed by a slave is interesting, and artfully conducted. The voyages of Sindbad claim attention: they were certainly attended to, by the author of Gulliver's Travels.

Tales in imitation of the Oriental have oft been attempted by English, and other European, authors: who, together with the figurative style, and wild invention of the Asiatics, (which, being extravagant, are easily imitated) endeavour also to paint the customs and manners of that people. They give us good store of gold and jewels; and eunuchs, slaves, and necromancers in abundance: their  
personages

personages are all Mahometan, or Pagan, and subject to the despotick government of Caliphs, Vizirs, Bakhaws, and Emperors; they drink sherbet, rest on sophas, and ride on dromedaries. We have Chinese Tales, Tartarian Tales, Persian Tales, and Mogul Tales; not to mention the Tales of the Fairies and Genii; some of which I read in my younger days: but, as they have left no trace in the memory, I cannot now give any account of them.

In the *Spectator*, *Rambler*, and *Adventurer*, there are many fables in the eastern manner; most of them very pleasing, and of a moral tendency. *Rasselas*, by Johnson, and *Almorán and Hamet*, by Hawkefworth, are celebrated performances in this way. The former is admirable in description, and in that exquisite strain of sublime morality by which the writings of this great and good man are so eminently distinguished:—of the latter, the style is rhetorical and solemn, and the sentiments are in general good, but the plan is obscure, and so contrived as to infuse perplexing notions of the Divine Providence; a subject, which the elegant writer seems to have considered very superficially, and very confusedly\*.—Addison excels in this sort of fable. His vision of Mirzah, in the second volume of the *Spectator*, is the finest piece of the kind I have ever seen; uniting the utmost propriety of invention with a simplicity and melody of language, that melts the heart, while it charms and soothes the imagination.

Modern Prose Fable (if we omit those sorts of it that have been already hinted at) may be divided into two kinds; which, for the sake of distinction, I shall call the ALLEGORICAL and the POETICAL. The Allegorical part of modern prose fable may be subdivided into two species, the *Historical*, and the *Moral*; and the Poetical part I shall also subdivide into two sorts, the *Serious*, and the *Comick*. Thus the Prose Fable of the moderns may be distributed into four species; whereof I shall speak in their order:

\* See the Preface to his *Voyages*.

1. The Historical Allegory; 2. The Moral Allegory: 3. The Poetical and Serious Fable; 4. The Poetical and Comick Fable. These two last I comprehend under the general term ROMANCE.

I. The FABULOUS HISTORICAL ALLEGORY exhibits real history disguised by feigned names, and embellished with fictitious adventures. This sort of fable may also be subdivided into the *Serious* and the *Comick*.

1. Of the former, the best specimen I know is the *Argenis*; written in Latin, about the beginning of the last century, by John Barclay a Scotchman: and supposed to contain an allegorical account of the Civil wars of France during the reign of Henry the third. I have read only part of the work: and what I read I never took the trouble to decypher, by means of the key which in some editions is subjoined to it, or to compare the fictitious adventures of Meleander and Lycogenes with the real adventures that are alluded to. I therefore am not qualified to criticize the performance: but can freely recommend it, as in some places very entertaining, as abounding in lively description, and remarkable for the most part, though not uniformly, for the elegance of the language.

2. We have a *Comick* specimen of the Historical Allegory, in the *History of John Bull*; a pamphlet written by the learned and witty Dr. Arbuthnot, and commonly printed among the works of Swift. It was published in Queen Anne's time; and intended as a satire on the Duke of Marlborough, and the rest of the whig ministry, who were averse to the treaty of peace that was soon after concluded at Utrecht. The war, which the Queen carried on against the French and Spaniards, is described under the form of a law-suit, that John Bull, or England, is said to have been engaged in with some litigious neighbours. A candid account of facts is not to be expected in an allegorical tale, written with the express design to make a party ridiculous. The work, however, has been much read,  
and

and frequently imitated. It is full of low humour, which in this piece the author affected; but which he could have avoided if he had thought proper; as he undoubtedly possessed more wit and learning, as well as virtue, than any other writer of his time, Addison excepted. In *John Bull*, great things are represented as mean; the style is consequently burlesque, and the phraseology, and most of the allusions, are taken from low life. There is a key printed, in the late editions, at the foot of each page, to mark the coincidence of the fable with the history of that period.

II. The second species of modern fabulous prose I distinguished by the name of the *Moral Allegory*. Moral and Religious Allegories were frequent in Europe about two hundred and fifty years ago. Almost all the Dramatick exhibitions of that time were of this character. In them, not only human virtues and vices personified, but also angels both good and evil, and beings more exalted than angels, were introduced, acting and speaking, as persons of the drama. Those plays, however, notwithstanding their incongruity, were written for the most part with the laudable design of exemplifying religious or moral truth; and hence were called Moralities. The publick exhibition of them in England ceased about the time of Shakspeare, or in the end of the sixteenth century: but several of the English Moralities are extant, and may be seen in some late collections of Old Plays. In Spain and Italy they continued longer in fashion. When Milton was on his travels, he happened to witness a representation of this kind, written by one Andrieno, and called *Original Sin*; from which, rude as it was, he is said to have formed the first draught of the plan of *Paradise Lost*.

Those were poetical allegories: but I confine myself to such as are in prose, and assume something of the historical form.—John Bunyan, an unlettered, but ingenious man, of the last century, was much given to this way of writing. His chief work is the

*Pilgrim's Progress*; wherein the commencement, procedure, and completion of the Christian life, are represented allegorically, under the similitude of a journey. Few books have gone through so many editions, in so short a time, as the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It has been read by people of all ranks and capacities. The learned have not thought it below their notice: and among the vulgar it is an universal favourite. I grant, the style is rude, and even indelicate sometimes; that the invention is frequently extravagant; and that in more than one place it tends to convey erroneous notions in theology. But the tale is amusing, though the dialogue be often low: and some of the allegories are well contrived, and prove the author to have possessed powers of invention, which, if they had been refined by learning, might have produced something very noble. This work has been imitated, but with little success. The learned Bishop Patrick wrote the *Parable of the Pilgrim*: but I am not satisfied, that he borrowed the hint, as it is generally thought he did, from John Bunyan. There is no resemblance in the plan; nor does the Bishop speak a word of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which I think he would have done, if he had seen it. Besides, Bunyan's fable is full of incident: Patrick's is dry, didactic, verbose, and exceedingly barren in the invention\*.

*Gulliver's Travels* are a sort of allegory; but rather Satirical and Political, than Moral. The work is in every body's hands; and has been criticised by many eminent writers. As far as the satire is levelled at human pride and folly; at the abuses of human learning; at the absurdity of speculative projectors; at those criminal or blundering expedients in policy, which we are apt to overlook, or even to applaud, because custom has made them familiar; so far the author deserves our warmest approbation, and his satire will

\* The *Imprimatur* prefixed to Patrick's *Pilgrim* is dated April 11, 1665. Bunyan's *Progress* was written, while he was in Bedford prison, where he lay twelve years, from 1660 to 1672; but I cannot find in what year it was first printed.



be allowed to be perfectly just, as well as exquisitely severe. His fable is well conducted, and, for the most part, consistent with itself, and connected with probable circumstances. He personates a sea-faring man; and with wonderful propriety supports the plainness and simplicity of the character. And this gives to the whole narrative an air of truth; which forms an entertaining contrast, when we compare it with the wildness of the fiction. The style too deserves particular notice. It is not free from inaccuracy: but, as a model of easy and graceful simplicity, it has not been exceeded by any thing in our language; and well deserves to be studied by every person, who wishes to write pure English.—These, I think, are the chief merits of this celebrated work; which has been more read, than any other publication of the present century. Gulliver has something in him to hit every taste. The statesman, the philosopher, and the critick, will admire his keenness of satire, energy of description, and vivacity of language: the vulgar, and even children, who cannot enter into these refinements, will find their account in the story, and be highly amused with it.

But I must not be understood to praise the whole indiscriminately. The last of the four voyages, though the author has exerted himself in it to the utmost, is an absurd, and an abominable fiction. It is absurd: because, in presenting us with rational beasts, and irrational men, it proceeds upon a direct contradiction to the most obvious laws of nature, without deriving any support from either the dreams of the credulous, or the prejudices of the ignorant. And it is abominable: because it abounds in filthy and indecent images; because the general tenor of the satire is exaggerated into absolute falsehood; and because there must be something of an irreligious tendency in a work, which, like this, ascribes the perfection of reason, and of happiness, to a race of beings, who are said to be destitute of every religious idea.—But, what is yet worse, if any thing can be worse, this tale represents human nature itself

as the object of contempt and abhorrence. Let the ridicule of wit be pointed at the follies, and let the scourge of satire be brandished at the crimes, of mankind: all this is both pardonable, and praiseworthy; because it may be done with a good intention, and produce good effects. But when a writer endeavours to make us dislike and despise, every one his neighbour, and be dissatisfied with that Providence, who has made us what we are, and whose dispensations towards the human race are so peculiarly, and so divinely beneficent; such a writer, in so doing, proves himself the enemy, not of man only, but of goodness itself; and his work can never be allowed to be innocent, till impiety, malevolence, and misery, cease to be evils.

The Tale of a Tub, at least the narrative part of it, is another Allegorical fable, by the same masterly hand; and, like the former, supplies no little matter, both of admiration, and of blame. As a piece of humourous writing, it is unequalled. It was the author's first performance, and is, in the opinion of many, his best. The style may be less correct, than that of some of his latter works; but in no other part of his writings has he displayed so rich a fund of wit, humour, and ironical satire, as in the Tale of a Tub. The subject is Religion: but the allegory, under which he typifies the Reformation, is too mean for an argument of so great dignity; and tends to produce, in the mind of the reader, some very disagreeable associations, of the most solemn truths with ludicrous ideas. Professed wits may say what they please; and the fashion, as well as the laugh, may be for a time on their side: but it is a dangerous thing, and the sign of an intemperate mind, to acquire a habit of making every thing matter of merriment and farcasm. We dare not take such liberty with our neighbour, as to represent whatever he does or says in a ridiculous light; and yet some men (I wish I could not say, clergymen) think themselves privileged to take liberties of this sort with the most awful, and most benign dispensations

tions of Providence. That this author has repeatedly done so, in the work before us, and elsewhere, is too plain to require proof \*. The compliments he pays the Church of England I allow to be very well founded, as well as part of the satire, which he levels at the Church of Rome; though I wish he had expressed both the one and the other with a little more decency of language. But, as to his abuse of the Presbyterians, whom he represents as more absurd and frantick, than perhaps any rational beings ever were since the world began, every person of sense and candour, whether Presbyterian or not, will acknowledge it, if he know any thing of their history, to be founded in gross misrepresentation. There are other faults in this work, besides those already specified; many vile images,

\* I know not whether this author is not the only human being, who ever presumed to speak in ludicrous terms of the Last Judgment. His profane verses on that tremendous subject were not published, so far as I know, till after his death: for Chesterfield's Letter to Voltaire, in which they are inserted, and spoken of with approbation (which is no more than one would expect from such a critick), and said to be copied from the original in Swift's hand-writing, is dated in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two. But this is no excuse for the Author. We may guess at what was in his mind, when he wrote them; and at what remained in his mind, while he could have destroyed them, and would not. Nor is it any excuse to say, that he makes Jupiter the agent: a Christian, granting the utmost possible favour to Poetick licence, cannot conceive a heathen idol to do that, of which the only information we have is from the word of God, and in regard to which we certainly know, that it will be done by the Deity himself. That humourous and instructive allegory of Addison, (*Spectator*, 558, 559) in which Jupiter is supposed to put it in every person's power to choose his own condition, is not only conformable to antient philosophy, but is actually founded on a passage of Horace.

I mean not to insinuate, that Swift was favourable to infidelity. There is good reason to believe he was not; and that, though too many of his levities are inexcusable, he could occasionally be both serious and pious. In fact, an infidel clergyman would be such a compound of execrable impiety and contemptible meanness, that I am unwilling to suppose there can be such a monster. The profaneness of this author I impute to his passion for ridicule, and rage of witticism; which, when they settle into a habit, and venture on liberties with what is sacred, never fail to pervert the mind, and harden the heart.

and obscene allusions; such as no well-bred man could read, or endure to hear read, in polite company.

III. I come now to the second species of modern prose fable, to which I gave the appellation of *Poetical*, to distinguish it from the former *Allegorical* species. In reading the *Allegorical Prose Fable*, we attend not only to the fictitious events that occur in the narrative, but also to those real events that are typified by the allegory: whereas in the *poetical prose fable* we attend only to the events that are before us. Thus, in the Tale of a Tub, I not only mind what is related of three brothers, Peter, Martin, and Jack, but also keep it constantly in view, that those three brothers are by the author meant to be the representatives of the Romish, English, and Presbyterian churches: whereas when I read Robinson Crusoe, or Tom Jones, I attend singly to the narrative; and no *key* is necessary to make me comprehend the author's meaning.

Considering this as the chief part of my subject, I dispatched the former parts as briefly as I could, that I might have the more time to employ upon it. The rise and progress of the MODERN ROMANCE, OR POETICAL PROSE FABLE, is connected with many topics of importance, which would throw (if fully illustrated) great light upon the history and politicks, the manners, and the literature, of these latter ages.—Observe, that I call this sort of fable *poetical*, from the nature of the invention; and *prose*, because it is not in verse. Prose and Verse are opposite, but Prose and Poetry may be consistent. *Tom Jones*, and *Telemachus*, are epick, or narrative poems, though written in prose; the one Comick, the other Serious and Heroick.

The subversion of the Roman Empire, by the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and other northern nations, was followed, or rather accompanied, with an universal neglect of learning, which continued for some centuries. During this long night of intellectual darkness, the classic writers of Greece and Rome were quite forgotten in these

these western parts of Europe; and many antient authors perished irrecoverably. To read and write was then a rare accomplishment. Even the clergy, who performed the service in Latin, according to the usage of the Church of Rome, seldom understood the words they pronounced. Nay, it was no uncommon thing for persons of rank, when they had occasion to sign papers of business, to employ a notary to subscribe for them, because they themselves had not learned to write. The very phrase of *signing* a paper came from the practice of putting a mark to it, instead of a name; and this mark was commonly the sign of the Cross. Alfred the Great, king of England, a prince of excellent parts, and who afterwards made considerable attainments in learning, was twelve years old, before a master could be found to teach him the alphabet.—The very implements of writing were so rare in those days, that the monks would often obliterate valuable manuscripts, by erasing the letters, that they might have the parchment to write upon. Of this a remarkable evidence appeared a few years ago. A scrap of parchment was found, on which part of the book of Tobit had been written, but which, on being narrowly inspected, seemed to have been originally inscribed with something else; and this was at length discovered to be a fragment of Livy. The fragment is now published.

Men are generally credulous, in proportion as they are ignorant. But want of books, and of the knowledge of letters, was not the sole cause of the ignorance that prevailed in the period of which I now speak. There was little, or no commerce in Europe; navigation and industry were neglected; and, except on pilgrimage to the shrines of saints, people seldom travelled beyond the bounds of their native country, or native province. The consequence may easily be guessed at. Not having the means of knowing what had happened in other ages, and being equally uninformed of what was now happening in other countries, they would without scruple give

credit to any fabulous reports that might be told them, concerning what was to be seen in foreign parts. Hence arose a thousand wild ideas, of giants, and dwarfs, dragons, and enchantments, of fairies, ghosts, witches, and hobgoblins. And when once people were satisfied, that such things were common in other lands, it was natural for them to believe, that they were not uncommon in their own. And the same extravagance of fancy, and love of superstition, may always be expected in times of ignorance; especially in countries, where traditions remain concerning antient history and fable; and where the priests, deluded themselves with visionary legends, not wholly destitute of knowledge, and living retired in gloomy and lonely habitations, find it their interest to deceive, amuse, and terrify the vulgar.

The credulity of mankind in those dark ages is now matter of astonishment. As late as the thirteenth century, when modern literature had made some progress, Dante, a famous Italian poet, published a work in verse, which he called *Inferno*; wherein he gave a description of the infernal regions, which he says, in the poem, that he had passed through, in company with Virgil: and this poem the common people of that time took for a real history, and seriously believed that Dante went down to hell from time to time. Sir John Mandeville, an Englishman of learning, set out on his travels in the year one thousand three hundred and twenty; employed thirty years in visiting foreign countries; and, at his return to Europe, published the history of his adventures in three languages, Latin, English, and Italian. His book, before publication, was presented to the Pope, who, after comparing it with the *Mappa Mundi*, was pleased to give it the sanction of his authority: a proof, that it not only was believed by the author, and by His Holiness, but was also thought credible enough according to the notions of those times. Yet this book, though Mandeville seems to have been an honest, and by no means an ignorant man, contains

contains the most absurd fables. The author gravely tells us, that he saw the rock to which Andromeda was chained, when they delivered her to the sea-monster, and adds, that Andromeda lived before the flood. With equal gravity he speaks of a Lady, who had been transformed into a serpent, or dragon, by a goddess called Diana, and was then confined in a dungeon, in the island of Cyprus, if I mistake not\*. He does not say, that he saw this lady; but he mentions it as a fact, which he had heard; and he seems not to disbelieve it. He speaks too of a nation of men fifty feet high, who inhabited an island in the East Indies, and of another race of mortals, who had their eyes in their shoulders: and all this, and much more, of the same kind, he appears to have credited, merely because he had been so informed.—There is reason to think, that Caxton, one of the first English printers, mistook a French translation of Virgil's *Eneid* for a true history;—if he did not use the word *history* in a sense different from what it now bears. Nay, a Swedish navigator, who lived not two hundred years ago, has affirmed, that, in the islands of Nicobar, in the gulph of Bengal, he discovered a race of men, with long tails, like those of cats. The islands of Nicobar, and their inhabitants, are now well known to Europeans; but the cats tails are no where to be found.

While the ignorance and credulity of this western world were so great, we may well suppose, that, in their histories (if they had any) little regard would be paid to truth; and none at all to probability, or even to possibility, in their fables. In fact, the first productions in the way of romance, that appeared in Europe, were in the highest degree extravagant.

But other causes, besides the credulity and ignorance of the times, conspired to give a peculiar cast of wildness to those performances, and make them totally unlike every thing of the kind, which had

\* I write from memory; not having the book at hand, nor knowing at present where to find it.

hitherto occurred to human fancy.—To explain these causes, it will be proper to give a brief account of that form of policy, which was introduced by the northern nations, who over-ran the Roman empire; and which is commonly called the Feudal Government. It has been described at large by many eminent writers. I shall enter into the subject no further, than is necessary to connect and illustrate my reasoning. This government it was, that, among many other strange institutions, gave rise to Chivalry: and it was Chivalry, which gave birth and form to that sort of fabulous writing, which we term *Romance*.

The word is Spanish, and signifies the Spanish Tongue: and the name is suitable enough to the nature of a language, whereof the greater part is derived from the antient Latin or Roman. It seems, the first Spanish books were fabulous: and, being called Romance, on account of the tongue in which they were written, the same name was afterwards given, by the other nations of Europe, not to Spanish books, which is the proper application of the term, but to a certain class of fabulous writings.

Some have thought, that the nations, who destroyed the Roman empire, were obliged to leave their own country, and establish themselves by force elsewhere; because at home their numbers were so great, that the soil was insufficient to support them. But this, I presume, is a mistake. Those northern regions, where the climate is inhospitable, may produce a hardy race of men, but cannot be supposed to produce them in very great numbers. In fact, the population in such countries has generally been found rather deficient, than excessive. I therefore think, that they left their native land, because it was uncomfortable; and because they had heard, that the conveniencies of life were more easily obtained in the southern parts of the world. Accordingly, there is no evidence, that they sent out colonies, or that one part of the nation went in quest of settlements, while the other remained at home: it rather  
6. appears,



appears, that a whole people emigrated at once, men, women, and children; without any purpose to return.

One of their first expeditions, that we read of, happened about the six hundred and fiftieth year of Rome; when the Cimbri and Teutones (who are supposed to have come from Denmark, and the northern parts of Germany) invaded the Roman Province with an army of three hundred thousand men, besides women and children, and were overthrown by Caius Marius, with prodigious slaughter. Their countrymen were more successful in the decline of the empire: and at length they wrested a great part of Europe out of the hands of the Romans; establishing themselves in the conquered provinces; the Franks and Normans in Gaul, the Goths and Vandals in Spain, and the Lombards in Italy.

There are, in the character of this extraordinary people, several particulars that deserve attention. We may call them one people, because a great similarity in manners, opinions, and government, prevailed among them; though they occupied many wide regions in the northern part of the continent of Europe.

First: They were a strong, hardy, and active race of men. This character they must have derived, in a great measure, from their climate and needy circumstances. Want is the parent of industry. To obtain even the necessaries of life, where the climate is cold, and the soil untractable, requires continual exertion; which at once inures the mind to vigilance, and the body to labour. The Germans, in Cesar's time, made it their boast, that they had not been under a roof for fourteen years\*: which conveyed such an idea of their ferocity and strength to the neighbouring Gauls, that they thought them invincible; and even Cesar found it difficult to persuade his Romans to march against them. Warm and fruitful countries generally produce (unless where a spirit of commerce and manufacture prevails) effeminacy and indolence: for there, neither

\* Cesar. Bell. Gall. i. 36.

art nor labour is necessary to procure what is requisite to life; and there, of course, both the mind and the body are apt to grow languid for want of exercise.

Secondly: They were fierce and courageous. This was owing, not only to their activity and necessitous life, but also, in part, to their religion; which taught them to undervalue life, and to wish rather to die in battle, or by violence, than in the common course of nature. For they believed, that the souls of those who fell in war, or were put to death, had a better right than others to happiness in a future life; and passed immediately into the *hall of Odin* (so in latter times they called heaven), where they were to be regaled with feasting and festivity through innumerable ages. Agreeably to which opinion, in some of the nations adjoining to Hudson's bay, who are thought to be of the same race, it is still customary, for the old men, when they become unfit for labour, to desire to be strangled; a service, which they demand as an act of duty from their children; or, if they have no children, request, as a favour, of their friends. \*

A third

\* "Are there not places," (says Mr. Locke, in the first book of his *Essay on Human Understanding*) "where at a certain age men kill, or expose, their parents, without remorse?" Taking for granted, that there are; his intention is, from this, and other supposed facts of a like nature, to draw these inferences. First, that there is no instinctive affection towards parents in the human constitution; that, independently on habits contracted by education, we should be as indifferent to the person whom we knew to be our father, or mother, as we are to any other man or woman; and that, if our teachers were to adopt a contrary plan of education, it would be not more difficult to make us hate our parents, because they are our parents, than it is to make us love them on that account. Secondly, and in general, that the same thing is true of every first principle, both moral and speculative, even of the *καταξι ενοιαι*, that is, of the axioms of geometry, for so Euclid calls them: in other words, that all our ideas of duty, and of truth, would be just the reverse of what they are, if we were from the first told, that compassion (for example) and justice are criminal, and cruelty and treachery meritorious; that bodies are not as our senses represent them; and that things equal to one and the same thing are not equal to one another.—If this is not the intention of Locke's first book, his words and arguments are without meaning. It is true,

A third peculiarity in the character of these people is, their attention to their women. With us, the two sexes associate toge-

he is there very full of words ; and so inaccurate in the use of them, as well as superficial in examining the facts brought to confirm his theory, that we can readily believe, what he himself insinuates, that he sat down to write his book, before he had any distinct idea of what was to be in it.

But, passing this ; let us consider, how far the fact hinted at in the quotation tends to prove, or to disprove, his general doctrine.

The fact is thus stated by a judicious Traveller, Mr. Ellis, in his *Voyage for the discovery of a North-west passage*. In some of the countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay, " they have one custom, which is very extraordinary : that when their parents grow " so old, as to be incapable to support themselves by their labour, they *require* their " children to strangle them ; and this is *esteemed an act of obedience* in the children to " perform. The manner of discharging this *last duty* is thus. The grave of the old " person being dug, he goes into it ; and, after having conversed, and smoked a pipe, " or perhaps drank a dram or two with his children, the old person signifies he is " ready : upon which, two of the children put a thong about his neck, one standing " on the one side, and the other opposite, and pull violently, till he is strangled ; then " cover him with earth, and over that erect a kind of rough monument of stones. As " for such old persons as have no children, they *request this office from their friends* ; " though in this last case it is not always complied with.—These Indians" (we are told by the same author) " believe in a Supreme Being infinitely good, and the author of all " their blessings ; they believe also in an evil being, of whom they are much afraid."

From this account we learn several things. 1. The parents are strangled by their own command, because they choose, it seems, to die in this manner : for old persons, when childless, solicit from others, as a favour, what they would have exacted from their children, as a duty. 2. Children would be thought undutiful to their parent, if they did not comply with his command in this particular. 3. This *last duty* is not performed without reluctance ; for they, who do not think themselves bound by the ties of blood, are unwilling, and sometimes refuse, to perform it. 4. The old person dies with composure, and even with festivity, as well as of choice : which is a proof, that by such a death he hopes to escape some great evil, or secure some important good. To which I may add, that such a practice could not become general, and continue from age to age, unless with the consent of the persons who suffer. Young people there, as in other countries, have the view of becoming parents, and of growing old, in their turn ; and would never set the example, if they were under any apprehension in regard to its consequences.

Does this fact, then, prove, that those poor barbarians are destitute of filial affection ? It proves just the contrary. The children comply with the parent's command, because they love him, and think it their duty to obey him : and they do nothing to him, but what, if in his circumstances, they would wish to be done to themselves.

If

ther, and mutually improve and polish one another : but in Rome and Greece they lived separate ; and the condition of the female

If a teacher were to say, “ Ye children, afflict and torment your parents, and, when they are old, put them to death ; for to them ye owe your life, and many of its most important blessings :”—he would hardly obtain a second hearing : the absurdity of the speech would be evident to every rational creature. But if his address were in these terms ; “ Children owe gratitude and obedience to their parents : let them, therefore, when a parent grows old, wishes to be at rest, and requires them to put an end to his sufferings, do as they are commanded ; for thus shall they recommend him to the favour of the good Deity, and satiate all the malevolence of the evil one :”—such an address to credulous and pagan barbarians might not perhaps appear absurd. And yet their acquiescence in it would not prove them destitute of natural affection, or of moral sentiment ; nay it would prove that they were possessed of both : for otherwise, how could they receive the one doctrine, and reject the other !

This note is already too long : and yet I think I shall not be blamed for subjoining, in honour of human nature, another extract from Mr. Ellis’s book : that ingenious work being now (I know not for what reason) very rare.

“ The Indians adjoining to Hudson’s Bay, except when intoxicated with brandy, are very courteous and compassionate, even to those who are absolute strangers, as well as to their own family : and their affection for their children is singularly great. An extraordinary instance of this happened lately at York-Fort. Two small canoes, passing Hayes’s river, when they had got to the middle of it, one of them, which was made of the bark of a birch tree, sunk, in which was an Indian, his wife, and child. The other canoe, being small, and incapable of receiving more than one of the parents and the child, produced an extraordinary contest between the man and his wife : not but that both of them were willing to devote themselves to save the other ; but the difficulty lay in determining which would be the greatest loss to the child. The man used arguments to prove it more reasonable that he should be drowned, than the woman. But she alledged, that it was more for the child’s advantage, that she should perish ; because he, as a man, was better able to hunt, and consequently to provide for it. The little time there was still remaining was spent in mutual expressions of tenderness ; the woman strongly recommending, as for the last time, to her husband, the care of her child. This being done, they took leave in the water ; the woman, quitting the canoe, was drowned ; and the man with the child got safe ashore ; and is now taken much notice of by the people thereabouts. It appears upon the whole, that the single object in view was the preservation of the child.”—Parental love and filial regard are not always proportioned to each other : yet, where the former is so strong, it cannot be supposed that the latter will be preternaturally weak.

was little better than slavery; as it still is, and has been from very early times, in many parts of Asia, and in European and African Turkey. But the Gothick warriors were in all their expeditions attended by their wives; whom they regarded as friends and faithful counsellors, and frequently as sacred persons, by whom the gods were pleased to communicate their will to mankind. This in part accounts for the reverence wherewith the female sex were always treated by those conquerors: and, as Europe still retains many of their customs, and much of their policy, this may be given as one reason of that polite gallantry, which distinguishes our manners, and has extended itself through every part of the world that is subject to European government. \*

Another thing remarkable in the Gothick nations, was an invincible spirit of liberty. Warm and fruitful countries, by promoting indolence and luxury, are favourable to the views of tyrannical princes; and commonly were in antient, as many of them are in modern times, the abode of despotism. But the natives of the north, more active and valiant, are for the most part more jealous of their privileges. Exceptions may be found to all general theories concerning the influence of climate in forming the human character: but this will be allowed to have been true of the antient Germans, and those other nations, whereof I now speak. All the Gothick institutions were, in their purest form, favourable to liberty. The kings, or generals, were at first chosen by those who were to obey them: and though they acknowledged, and indeed introduced, the distinction of superiour and vassal, they were careful to secure the independence, and respective rights of both, as far as the common safety would permit. To them there is reason to believe that we are indebted for those two great establishments, which form the basis of British freedom, a parliament for making laws, and juries for trying criminals, and deciding differences.

\* See Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition. Chap. iv.

These four peculiarities, in the character of the northern conquerors, it will be proper to keep in mind; that we may the better understand some things that are to follow. They were bold and hardy: they despised death, or rather, they thought it honourable and advantageous to fall in battle: they were indulgent and respectful to their women: and they were animated with a spirit of liberty and independence.

When they left their own country to go in quest of a better, it is probable they made choice of the general and other officers who were to command them. They were volunteers in the service; and they served without pay, or at least without any pecuniary acknowledgement. All the recompence they looked for, was to have a share in the lands of such countries as they might conquer. No other indeed could have been given them, as their commander had no money to bestow; nor can we conceive, how he could have forced them into the service, if they had been unwilling.

Suppose them now to have conquered a country. To exterminate the natives, seems not to have been their intention\*: they only

\* That no instance of extermination took place, during the period of Gothick Conquest, cannot be affirmed, if we admit the testimony of contemporary historians. Several instances might have happened; and other horrid deeds, whereof there is no record, must have been perpetrated, while so many violent and extensive revolutions were going on. In regard to the character of the northern invaders, authors are not agreed: some look upon them as barbarians of the worst kind; many judge more favourably, both of their policy, and of their manners. It was natural enough for the writers of that time to think and speak of them with the utmost abhorrence, and rather to magnify the calamities that were before their eyes, than to describe things impartially. Several circumstances incline me to believe, that the sufferings of the vanquished, though they must have been great, were not so dreadful, as some learned writers imagine. I confine myself to one particular, which is connected with a subject that I have elsewhere touched upon.

If *we* were to be exterminated by a race of men, whose language was totally different from ours, would not our language be exterminated too? Can it be supposed, that the speech of our conquerors would undergo any material alteration from the English, which, without understanding it, they might have heard during the war, or which might

only wished to settle among them, to introduce their own customs and form of government, and to have the territory, or as much of it as they might have occasion for, at their disposal. The land they considered as their property; and presented, as a voluntary gift, to their sovereign or commander, on condition of his dividing it  
among

might still be muttered in obscure corners by a few of our surviving countrymen, who had escaped from the general massacre, and were suffered to remain in their own land, because too inconsiderable to provoke expulsion? In such a case, it seems probable, that the language of the country would be altogether changed, and that in this, as in every thing else, the conquerors would give the law. But if Britain were now to be subdued by a people of a strange tongue; and if, after the lapse of a thousand years, the British language should bear such a resemblance to the English now spoken, as the Italian and Spanish bear to the Latin; would it not be reasonable for our successors of that remote period to conclude, that the invaders of the eighteenth century must have been but few, in proportion to the number of those among whom they established themselves; and that, therefore, though they became masters of the country, they did not extirpate the people?

In Gaul, in Spain, and in Italy, the Roman tongue was generally spoken at the time of the Gothick invasions; not pure, we may well imagine, in the remoter parts especially, but with such debasements, as it is natural for provinces, at a considerable distance from the seat of empire, to adopt in the course of two or three hundred years. And yet, notwithstanding these debasements, and those additional barbarisms introduced by the Franks, Vandals, Lombards, &c. the languages now spoken in France, Spain, and Italy, are so like the antient Latin, and one another, that any person who understands one of them may guess at the meaning of hundreds and thousands of words in each of the rest. In fact, though many changes have been made with regard to syntax, inflection, articles, and other things of less moment, these languages may all be said to be composed of the same materials. Of the Italian, in particular, an author, who must be allowed to be a competent judge, declares, that, though very many barbarous and northern words have been brought into it, one might form, not a discourse only, but an entire and large volume of good Italian, wherein not a single word or phrase should be admitted, that did not derive its origin from the Latin writers. Tutto che non si possa negare, che sianvivi aggiunte moltissime voci barbare, ed ultramontani, io sono certissimo altresì, che si potrebbe formare, non dico un discorso, ma un intero e grosso volume in buon Italiano, senza che vi entrasse pure una sola parola, o frase, di cui non si trovasse l'origine negli scrittori Latini. *Le vicende della Letteratura. Cap. 4.*

among them, on certain terms, and according to a plan, which, though perhaps not well defined in the beginning, came at last to be what I am going to describe.

He first appropriated a part of the conquered territory to his own use; for the maintenance of his household, and the support of his dignity. This was afterwards called the Crown-lands, and the Royal Demefnes. The rest he divided among his great officers, allotting to each a part. The officer held this property, on condition of professing loyal attachment to his sovereign, and serving him in war, at his own charges. He who conferred the property was called the Superiour; and, he who received it, the Vassal: who, on being invested, swore fealty or allegiance to his superiour, and on his bended knees did him homage, by declaring himself his *man, homo*; whence came the barbarous Latin word *homagium*, and the English term *homage*. If afterwards he proved unfaithful, or abandoned his lord in battle, or refused to serve him in war when regularly summoned, he forfeited his land, and the superiour might either retain it, or give it to another. The land thus granted was called a *fief*, in Latin *beneficium*; and this sort of tenure was

Next to the Italian, the Spanish and Portuguese bear the greatest resemblance to the Latin; although they suffered alteration, not only from the northern invaders, but also from the Moors, who conquered Spain in the eighth century, and were not finally driven out of it, till the fifteenth. If these languages, after all, lost so little of their primitive form, how inconsiderable must have been the number of the victorious Goths and Vandals, when compared to that of the people whom they subdued, and among whom they settled!

The Saxons, who established themselves in England, seem to have been more intent upon extermination, than any others of those adventurers. The British language they extirpated from all the provinces that fell into their hands, and planted their own in its stead; which they could hardly have done, if they had not destroyed the greater part of the people. And to this day, the English and lowland Scotch dialects are called *Saxonic* or Saxon, by the highlanders of North Britain, and do indeed partake more of that tongue, than of any other. By the Norman Conquest many French words were brought in, but the foundation and fabrick of the language were not materially affected.

termed



termed a *feud*, or *feod*, from two Norſe words, *fee* ſignifying *reward*, and *odh property* \*: an appellation, which implied, that the land was indeed the property of the vaſſal, but that he derived it from the ſuperiour, and held it, on condition of rendering perſonal ſervice, by way of reward or recompence. And hence, the form of government introduced by theſe northern nations is called the Feudal government, and the laws peculiar to that form are called the Feudal laws.

Be careful not to confound this with another Engliſh term of the ſame ſound and letters, *Feud*, which denotes contention, or quarrel: the one is a ſimple term of Saxon original; the other is compounded, and derived, as above, from another language.

As the vaſſal's property was *feudal*, that of the Sovereign, who held of no ſuperiour, was called *Allodial*, from *all*, *totum*, and *odh*, *property*; to intimate, that it was wholly his own, and that he owed no reward nor acknowledgement to any perſon for it. A ſovereign might indeed be feudatory to another ſovereign for certain lands or provinces; but, in regard to theſe, the feudatory was a vaſſal, and obliged to do homage to his ſuperiour: as we find that the kings of Scotland often did, for ſome of their ſouthern territories, to the kings of England; and the kings of England to the kings of France for ſome of their foreign dominions.

In conformity to the feudal inſtitutions and language, our law ſtill ſuppoſes every tenure in land, pertaining to a ſubject, to be derived either from another ſubject, or from the ſovereign. But, in this laſt caſe, the tenure is really allodial; for thoſe lands are ſaid to hold of the Crown, which do not hold of any ſubject.

They, who derived their tenures immediately from the ſovereign, came, in proceſs of time, to be the barons, thanes, lords, or nobility, of a feudal kingdom. They had, all of them, caſtles, and

\* Blackſtone's Commentaries on the Laws of England. Book ii. c. 4.

kept a court, and a retinue, resembling that of the monarch: and each of them, within his own territory, had great power, and possessed many of the privileges of royalty; as the right of conferring certain dignities, of coining money, and of pardoning criminals.

The state of a feudal lord resembled that of his sovereign in other respects. He retained part of his territory in his own hands, for the support of his dignity and household; and the rest, with consent of the king, he divided among his own vassals, according to the same feudal tenure, by which he himself held his lands of the sovereign. The secondary vassals were afterwards known, in some countries, by the name of Armigeri, or Esquires; which in the original signification denoted Armour-bearers, or Bearers of shields. On being invested with their respective fiefs, they did homage to their immediate superiour, swore allegiance to him, and promised at their own charges to attend him in war, when summoned for that purpose. They, like their superiours the Great Barons, had jurisdiction within their own territories; and, in the economy of their household, would no doubt imitate them, as far as they were able.

The Secondary Barons, like the Primary, had their vassals, to whom they gave lands on the same feudal conditions; and by whom they were served and attended in war, even as they themselves served and attended the nobility, and the nobility the king. In times of peace, and when military attendance was not required, the lowest order of vassals would sometimes make a payment of corn, cattle, or money, in return for their lands; and this in time became general, and was the origin of rents.

A feudal kingdom, thus established, resembled, as an elegant author observes\*, the encampment of a great army: and no form of policy could be better contrived, for securing a conquest. Mi-

\* Robertson's History of Scotland. Book i.

litary service being the chief part of the duty which the vassal owed his lord, and being equally the business of men of all ranks, we may conclude, that the whole nation must have been trained to arms: which would thus come to be considered as the most honourable, and, for a man of any rank, the only honourable profession. If to this we add the natural ferocity of the people, and their high spirit of independence, we shall be at no loss to account for that passionate love of warlike enterprise, which diffused itself through all the members of the feudal system. A people, thus arranged, prepared, and animated, was at all times ready to appear in arms, when summoned by the sovereign; who would instantly be attended by the Greater Barons his vassals, and they by their vassals, and so downward.

I. hinted, that the whole nation was trained to the use of arms. In the beginning it would probably be so: but, when the Gothick system had been for some time established, this was not the case. All the free men, indeed, were warriors; but the lowest sort of people, who supplied their betters with food, cloaths, armour, and other necessaries, had not that honour, and were in fact no better than slaves, though all were not equally servile.

For a nation, when once conquered, and subjected to this form of policy, it was scarce possible to throw off the yoke, or even attempt to regain their freedom. The truth is, that the vanquished soon came to incorporate with the victors; who seemed, when they made their first appearance in the southern parts of Europe, to found their political ideas on the natural equality of mankind.

What passes for the history of those dark ages is in many particulars little better than conjecture. It is however certain, that the Feudal plan of subordination became at length almost universal in Europe. Those islands and provinces, that had not been conquered, or invaded, by the northern warriors, found their account in adopting it: partly, no doubt, from a desire to imitate the rest  
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of the world; and partly too, that they might, by establishing the same military arrangements, acquire the same military vigour, and be able to maintain independency in the midst of their warlike neighbours. The feudal system, in its full extent, was not brought into England, till the Conquest by William Duke of Normandy; who imported it from his own country, where it had been long established; and introduced it into the southern part of this island, with the consent of the Great Council of the nation. At what time it came into Scotland, is not yet, so far as I know, determined among antiquaries. But that it was adopted by the Scots, and maintained its influence longer in North, than in South, Britain, is well known.\*

Every human institution is liable to change. And no form of government has hitherto been devised, that is not obnoxious to alteration from a thousand causes, which human laws cannot prevent, because human wisdom cannot foresee. The Feudal system soon became different from what it had originally been. While people are in needy circumstances, they have not the same views of things, which they afterwards come to have, when settled in the secure enjoyment of riches and honour. The feudal king or commander was at first elective; and the fiefs granted by the superiour to his vassal were but for life, or during pleasure. But both the sovereign power, and the right of the feudatory, were in time made perpetual in the same family, and descended from the father to the son, or to the nearest relation. The nobles grew proud and ambitious, in proportion as they became independent. In some cases, their fiefs were still further secured by Entails; which put it in the power of their posterity to enlarge, but not diminish the inheritance. Nay, at last, the son, whether worthy or unworthy, was allowed to possess those titles of honour, which the merit of his father had obtained from the sovereign: and thus the dignities, as well as lands,

\* See Robertson's History of Scotland. Book i.

of the feudal baron, became hereditary. And, what is still more singular, though great abilities are requisite to qualify one for the great offices of state, and though nothing can be more absurd, than to bestow an office of difficulty upon a person who is unfit for it; yet many of the feudal nobles, by force of importunity, or as a reward for particular services, obtained the high privilege of having certain great and lucrative posts annexed to their respective families.

These corruptions of the old feudal system were gradually introduced, in consequence of the aspiring genius of the nobles, and want of power in the kings. The lands of the former were honoured with privileges, that allowed an extensive, and something even of royal, authority, to the proprietor. Before him, or judges appointed by him, all causes, civil or criminal, were tried, which concerned any of his vassals: and if the vassal of a baron was summoned before any of the king's courts, the lord of that vassal might refuse to give him up, reserving to himself the right of trying him; and might even punish his vassal, if he submitted to any other jurisdiction, than that of his immediate superiour. Thus, it is easy to see, that the influence of the crown would be very weak, except within the king's own territory: and that contests would take place between him and his nobles, wherein the latter might have the advantage. And hence, a wealthy baron, who had a great number of dependants, might vie, in the splendour of his economy, even with the sovereign himself, and learn to set him, and his power, at defiance: whence would arise insolent demands from the nobles, and mean-spirited concessions on the part of the king. In fact, the history of modern Europe contains, for several ages, little more, than a detail of dissensions between the kings and their nobility. For, in process of time, the power of the feudal barons, increased by legacies, lucrative marriages, and imprudent concessions from the crown, became offensive, and even intolerable, to  
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their sovereigns : who were thus obliged, in self-defence, to devise expedients for checking that ambition, which gave them so much uneasiness. Some think, that the Crusades took their rise from this principle.

The Crusades were military expeditions into Palestine, undertaken by the Christian princes of Europe, with a view to exterminate, as they pretended, from the Holy Land, those Turks and Saracens, who were then in possession of it. For they gave out, that it was a reproach to Christendom, to permit infidels to live and reign in a country, which in antient times belonged to the posterity of Abraham, and had been honoured with the presence of our Saviour, while he sojourned among men. These warlike enterprises, warranted and encouraged by the Pope, were well suited to the enthusiastick valour of the feudal times, as well as to the religious opinions that prevailed while popery and ignorance were universal in the western world. The nobility and people, therefore, engaged in them with eagerness. They believed, that they should perform an acceptable service to God, by destroying, or at least by conquering, the enemies of the Christian faith ; and that the reward of their labour would be military renown in this life, and a crown of glory in the next. The pope claimed, and was allowed to have, power to remit the sins of the whole world : and a general remission of sin, together with many advantages of a secular nature \*, was offered to all who would enlist in those armaments.

But whatever the opinions might be of those who were to serve in the holy wars, as they were called, we may, without breach of charity, conclude, that the princes, who planned them, were actuated no less by political, than by religious motives. They found their nobility turbulent at home ; and were happy to engage them in foreign expeditions, from which it was probable, that the greater part would never return.—The expedition was called a crusade, or

\* See Robertson's History of Charles V. vol. i. page 240.

croisade, from a Latin, or from a French, word signifying *a cross*; which has in every age been an emblem of Christianity, and which these adventurers, as the champions of the faith, bore in their standard, and impressed upon their armour.

The honours acquired by the heroes of the Crusade were not inconsiderable; though attended with great expence, both of treasure, and of blood. They conquered Palestine, and drove the Saracens out of it: and Godfrey of Bologne, or Bouillon, was actually crowned king of Jerusalem, about the year eleven hundred. Those, who had distinguished themselves in these wars, expressed their achievements by some emblematical device, engraven, or painted, on their shield: and this is said to have been the origin of Armorial Ensigns; which, though they may now be purchased with money, were antiently attainable by valour only. For the defensive armour then in use was of a particular kind, and quite different from that of the Greeks and Romans. The Feudal baron cascd his whole body in steel or brass: and the helmet was so contrived, as to cover upon occasion every part of his face, except the eyes; so that in the field he could not be known, but by the figures on his target, or by the make or colour of his arms. And by these the warriors of that time were often distinguished. Edward the Black Prince, a name famous in the English history, was so called from the colour of his armour, which is still preserved in the Tower of London.

I said, that the figures, which the Crusader displayed on his shield, were the origin of ensigns armorial. And this is the opinion of many authors: but it can be true of such figures only, as were according to the system of modern heraldry. For devices on shields are more antient: witness the shield of Hercules by Hesiod; that of Achilles by Homer; and those of the *seven chiefs at Thebes* particularly described by Eschylus. Some fancy, that they are of still higher antiquity, and were known to Noah, Abraham, and Jacob;

and that the twelve tribes of Israel were distinguished by their respective ensigns. But this is foreign from the present purpose.

That spirit of valour and religion, and that passion for travelling and strange adventures, to which the crusades were so favourable, gave rise to Chivalry; which now began to appear in the world, and in time produced very important consequences, in politicks, in manners, and in literature. I am not ignorant, that some authors assign it an earlier date; and are rather inclined to derive the crusades from chivalry, than chivalry from the crusades. The dispute is not very material. Certain it is, that Chivalry was first known about the time of the crusades; and that the romantick enthusiasm, wild fancy, and desperate valour, which characterised the knights who professed it, were much inflamed, and partly produced, by the reports then circulating through a credulous world, concerning the adventures that were believed to have befallen the heroes of the holy war.

The word *chivalry* is derived from the French *chevalier*; which, like the Latin *eques*, properly signifies a man who serves in war on horseback. As the poorer sort served on foot, *Eques* in Latin, and *Chevalier* in French, became titles of honour, corresponding nearly, but not perfectly, with the English term *knight*.

Chivalry was a military profession. The man, who wished to be distinguished in this way, dressed himself in a suit of the armour of that time; and, girding on a sword, and grasping a spear, mounted his horse, and set out on some warlike enterprise. He could not, however, be considered as a complete cavalier, till he had received the honour of knighthood. This none can now confer, but a sovereign prince; but any man, who was himself a knight, could then confer it; and a sovereign would condescend to accept of it from the hands of a subject. The person, who was invested with this honour, received it on his knees; and many ceremonies, both warlike and religious, were performed on the



occasion. — There are several things remarkable in the character of the knights of chivalry; which may be partly accounted for, from the preceding observations.

1. The first is, their Religious character. The authority of the church of Rome was then unbounded and universal in Europe; and the wars undertaken to rescue the holy land infused a religious enthusiasm into all who took part in those expeditions, that is, into every European, who aspired to military fame. Hence piety, as well as valour, was considered as indispensably requisite to form a gallant soldier. Some parts, too, of Europe, particularly Spain, had suffered from the invasion of Saracens and other infidel nations, who by their cruelty had rendered themselves, and their religion, objects of horror to all Christendom. When a knight, made captive by those unbelievers, was prevailed on, by threats, punishment, or exhortation, to abandon the true faith, he was branded among Christians with the name of a Recreant, that is, of an Apostate Knight: a term of the bitterest reproach. For every knight, at his installation, swore to maintain the Catholick faith, in opposition to every danger. And therefore this term implied, in the language of Chivalry, nothing less, than an impious, perjured, and profligate coward.\*

2. The second thing remarkable in the sons of chivalry, is their valour; and, I may add, their love of fighting. This they might have derived, as we have seen, from their Gothick progenitors; and this every feudal institution tended to encourage. This, by their expeditions against the infidels, was raised to a pitch of extravagance bordering on phrensy; and was further cherished by those private broils, wherein the feudal nobility were, from the nature of the government, and the ineffectual authority of the law, almost continually engaged. The very sports of those warlike barons were attended with bloodshed: for then, on solemn festivals, and when

\* Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance.

people met together to be merry, tilts and tournaments, and other forms of single combat, were exhibited, for the entertainment of kings, and lords, and even of ladies. † And these encounters were by no means mock-battles. The knights, fixing their lances, with the points advanced, made their horses run violently together; and both knight and horse were often overturned by the shock, and sometimes killed. If they survived the first assault, which was generally the case, they attacked each other with their swords, till one of them fell, or owned himself vanquished, or till they were parted by the officer, who presided at the ceremony. Audemar de Valentia, earl of Pembroke, was killed in one of those encounters, on the very day of his marriage. The mode of fighting at that time, as well as in antient Greece and Italy, had, no doubt, some influence upon the valour of the combatants, or made them at least more eager to display it. With us, by means of fire-arms, the weakest man is a match for the strongest: and all that our soldiers have to do, is to show their contempt of danger, presence of mind, and regard to discipline. But, before the invention of gunpowder, a warrior, who slew his enemy, gave proof, not of valour only, but also of strength, and of address in the use of his weapons.

3. Their passion for strange adventures is another trait in the character of the knights of chivalry. The world was then little

† Tilts and tournaments, however, ought not to be looked upon, as unnatural expedients of a barbarous and bloody policy. In their first institution, they were not only rational, but wise: “because of singular use to instruct the nobility and gentry, who formed the cavalry of those days, in the dextrous management of their horses and arms.” So says the great historian, upon the authority of writers who lived in the age of tournaments. And he subjoins the following pertinent remark. “Indeed, all nations, desirous to excel in war, have endeavoured to render their publick diversions conducive to that purpose,” (that is, to military discipline); “a policy, which seems to be too much forgotten at this time, in this kingdom.” *Lord Lyttelton’s Notes on the fifth book of his History of the age of Henry the Second.* That single combat was an amusement of heroes in the days of Homer, we learn from the funeral games in honour of Patroclus.

known,

known, and men (as I observed before) were ignorant and credulous. Strange fights were expected in strange countries; dragons to be destroyed, giants to be humbled, and enchanted castles to be overthrown. The caverns of the mountain were believed to be inhabited by magicians; and the depth of the forest gave shelter to the holy hermit, who, as the reward of his piety, was supposed to have the gift of working miracles. The demon yelled in the storm, the spectre walked in darkness, and even the rushing of water in the night was mistaken for the voice of a goblin. The castles of the greater barons, reared in a rude but grand style of architecture; full of dark and winding passages, of secret apartments, of long uninhabited galleries, and of chambers supposed to be haunted with spirits; and undermined by subterraneous labyrinths as places of retreat in extreme danger; the howling of winds through the crevices of old walls, and other dreary vacuities; the grating of heavy doors on rusty hinges of iron; the shrieking of bats, and the screaming of owls, and other creatures, that resort to desolate or half-inhabited buildings: — these, and the like circumstances, in the domestick life of the people I speak of, would multiply their superstitions, and increase their credulity; and, among warriors, who set all danger at defiance, would encourage a passion for wild adventure, and difficult enterprise.

Consider, too, the political circumstances of the feudal barons. They lived apart, in their respective territories, where their power was like that of petty kings; and in their own fortified castles, where they kept a train of valiant friends and followers: and, in the economy and splendor of their household, they imitated royal magnificence. An offender, who had made his escape, either from the publick justice of his country, or from the vengeance of some angry chief, was sure of a place of refuge, if he could find admittance into the castle of any other lord. Hence publick justice was eluded, and the authority of the law despised: and a wicked

and powerful baron, secure within his own castle, would even defy the power of the sovereign himself, or perhaps with hostile intention meet him in the field, at the head of an army of determined followers. William earl of Douglas was generally attended, on solemn occasions, by a body of two thousand horse. Such a man it might be unsafe, even for a king, to provoke. As late as the reign of Mary queen of Scots, we read of a court of law held near the border of England; and are told, that the inhabitants of eleven counties were summoned by royal proclamation, to defend the persons of the judges, and enforce their decrees. \*

Hence a conjecture may be formed of the distracted state of those feudal governments, in which the nobility had acquired great power, and high privileges. The most daring enormities were daily committed, to gratify the resentment, or the rapacity, of those chieftains: castles were invaded, and plundered, and burned: depredations by the vassals of one lord were made upon the grounds and cattle of another; and horrid murders and other cruelties perpetrated. Rich heiresses, and women of distinguished beauty, were often seized upon, and compelled to marry the ravisher. Royalty itself was not secure from these outrages. When Eleanor queen of France was divorced from her husband Louis VII, she was, in her journey to her own hereditary dominions, waylaid by three princes, at three different places, each of whom intended to force her to marry him: but she escaped them all; and afterwards gave her hand to Henry the Second, king of England †. Nay, in those days, there were outlaws and robbers, who, possessing themselves of mountains and forests, got together a little army of followers, and lived by rapine; while the power of the kingdom was employed in vain to dislodge, and bring them to justice. Such, in England, were the famous Adam Bell, and Robin Hood, and others who are still celebrated in ballads: and, even in the memory of persons now alive,

\* Robertson's History of Scotland.

† Lord Lyttelton's Age of Henry II.

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there were some of the same profession remaining in the highlands of Scotland; but the race at last is happily extinct.—In a word, the western world was in those feudal times full of extraordinary events, and strange vicissitudes of fortune. And therefore we need not wonder, that a passion for adventures and warlike enterprize should have been universal among the knights of chivalry.

4. They were also distinguished by a zeal for justice: and, as the laws were so ineffectual, professed to take up arms in vindication of the rights of mankind; to punish the oppressor; to set at liberty the captive; to succour the distressed damsel; and to rid the world of those false knights, who wandered about in armour, to accomplish wicked purposes. These were noble designs; and, while society was so insecure, and the law so openly violated, must have been attended with good effects.—If you ask, how this heroick part of their character is to be accounted for; I answer, that they seem to have derived it, partly from their northern ancestors, who were lovers of liberty, and generous in their behaviour to the weaker sex; and partly from their attachment to the Christian religion, whereof they were the declared champions, and which, disfigured as it then was by superstition, would still be a restraint upon the passions of those who were willing to attend to its dictates.

Besides, the disorders of the time were so great, that sober-minded men, who were at all enlightened by knowledge, or capable of reflexion, would see, that such an institution might be beneficial, and was become almost necessary to the existence of society. At first, perhaps, their views might reach no further, than to defend the persons, and redress the grievances of their friends\*. But the habit of doing this, and the honour acquired by it, would determine them to enlarge their plan, and form the generous resolution of patronising mankind, by going through the world, to signalize their valour, in protecting the weak, and punishing the haughty.

\* Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance.

Their courage, their passion for adventures, their desire of seeing what was wonderful in foreign parts, and those hopes of future happiness which religion taught them to entertain, conspired with their military genius, and with their sense of the evils to which they saw their fellow-creatures exposed, to produce that extraordinary personage, a Knight Errant, or wandering knight: a character, which they who have read Don Quixote are apt to smile when they hear mentioned; but which, in its origin, was honourable to the warriors who bore it, and of no small advantage to the publick.

5. The fifth and last characteristick of chivalry, is the Courtesy of the knights who professed it. I remarked, that the founders of the feudal system were distinguished, among all the nations then known in Europe or Asia, by the peculiarity of their behaviour to their women; whom they regarded and loved, as their friends, and faithful counsellors, and as invested with something of a sacred character. Accordingly we are told by some authors, that in all their conquests they were never guilty of violence, where the female sex was concerned. This delicacy they transmitted to their descendants; among the greater part of whom, whatever outrages might now and then be committed by individuals, it seems to have been a point of honour, to be generous and respectful in their attentions to women. This was at least an indispensable part of the duty of a knight errant. By the statutes of Chivalry, the love of God was the first virtue, and devotion to the ladies the second\*. But that devotion had nothing licentious in it; being delicate to a degree that bordered on extravagance, if not on impiety. For the true knight did not expect condescension on the part of his mistress, till he had proved himself worthy of her, by deeds of arms, and performed many acts of heroism as her champion and admirer. And, when he was going to attack his enemy, we are told it was customary

\* Hurd's Letters.

for him, first, to implore the help of God, and then to invoke, or at least to mention, the name of his mistress.

The gallant behaviour of these knights may further be accounted for, from that religious ardour, which prompted them to signalize themselves as the champions of the faith, and to fulfil those duties of benevolence and kindness, which are no where so earnestly recommended as in the Gospel, and which form the most substantial, and indeed the only substantial, part of true politeness.

The domestick life of the feudal baron must also have had considerable influence, in refining the manners of men and women in the higher ranks. He lived, as already observed, in his castle, with a numerous train of friends and vassals, who formed a court, similar in its economy to that of the sovereign. Luxury was little known at that time, even in palaces. The kings of England had their chambers littered with rushes; and their beds were laid on straw or hay. Every person of fashion in a great family has now a separate apartment; but then it was not so. The hall of the castle was a place of constant and universal resort\*. There appeared the Baron himself, with his lady and children, and those noble guests who might occasionally reside with him; there too were often seen his vassals, ranked according to their dignity; and there, in a lower situation, the chief servants of the family would sometimes assemble. Were so many persons of mean and of equal rank to meet together, every man would indulge his own humour, and politeness would not be much minded. But the very great diversity of ranks in a feudal castle would introduce courteous behaviour;

\* "After having attended your Lady in the morning," says the Troubadour Amanieu des Escas in his advice to a *Gentlewoman*, "you may walk in the great hall, and salute with civility those who pass there; answering them in a courteous manner, but without exceeding in talk. Be grave in your step, and modest in your look." *Mrs. Dobson's History of the Troubadours*, pag. 444. — In those days, the upper servants in great houses were generally persons of family. By the common people in Scotland they are still called, *the gentlewoman*, and *the gentleman*.

while the great found it their interest, to be affable; and those of the lower sort, to be respectful. Think with what reverence the inferiour vassals would look up to the Baron, who had so many men, and so much wealth, at his command; and who, within his own jurisdiction, could pardon, or put to death, and enjoyed many other privileges of royalty. The ladies of the family, conscious of their high rank, restrained by native modesty, and intimidated by the presence of their relations, would, in the midst of this great domestick assembly, maintain a reserve, sufficient to discourage all familiarity on the part of the other sex. Ladies of lower rank would imitate them: and thus it is reasonable to think, that there must have prevailed, and we have positive evidence, that there actually did prevail, among the women of fashion in those days, a dignity, and even a stateliness, of manner, tending to inspire the enamoured beholder with a passion compounded of love and veneration. Hence the origin of Romantick Love: which, regarding its object as something more than human, forms extravagant ideas of perfection and happiness; a passion almost peculiar to latter times; and which, in antient Greece and Rome, as well as in Asia, where the sexes lived separate, and where the condition of the female was little better than servitude, could have no place. For, if it be true, that a prudent reserve commands some degree of reverence; and that the best of humankind have blemishes, which at a distance are not seen, and which when near cannot be concealed; we need not wonder at the effects, said to have been produced, in courteous knights, by the sublime prudery of accomplished ladies; nor at the opposite tendency of those modes of life, by which men are emboldened to consider women as a sort of property, and as rather under the standard of human excellence, than above it.

Politeness and courtesy take their rise among those who stand in awe of one another. For this reason, Monarchy, where different



ranks of men are established, has always been thought more favourable to elegant manners, than any of the republican forms of government, in which all the citizens are supposed to be equal, or nearly so. In his own court, that is, in his castle, the feudal baron was a monarch in miniature; and polite manners, like those that take place where kings have their residence, would naturally be diffused through his whole household. You easily know by one's behaviour, whether one has been much in the company of one's superiours. A man of spirit contracts no servility from that circumstance: but he acquires the habit of attending to the wants and wishes of those with whom he converses, of complying with their innocent humours, of adapting himself to their views of things, and their peculiar ways of thinking; and he also acquires the habits of unassuming speech, elegant phraseology, and easy motion.—It has been remarked by several writers, that the true Scotch highlander is distinguished by a gentility of behaviour, which does not generally display itself in the lower ranks of mankind. The fact, I believe, is true; and may be accounted for, if not from the feudal, at least from the patriarchal, policy of the people; from the relation of clanship subsisting between the lord and his vassal, which entitles the latter to the company of the former, and occasions a more familiar intercourse, than is elsewhere met with, between the gentry and the commonalty.—And therefore it is not surprising, that there should have been, notwithstanding the rudeness of the times, so much courtesy in the castle of a feudal baron; especially among those who appeared there in a military character, and still more especially among the knights of chivalry.

Besides, the character of a true knight was very delicate: and single combat was a thing so familiar to him, and withal accounted so honourable, that he never failed to resent in a hostile manner any reproachful word that might be thrown out against his virtue, particularly against his faith, or his courage. Hence reproachful

words would in general be avoided; which would promote courtesy, by refining conversation. And hence the origin of Duelling: a practice, unknown to Greece and Rome; which took its rise in the feudal times, and probably among the sons of chivalry; and which, though in many respects absurd and wicked, is allowed to have promoted politeness, by making men cautious of offending one another.

The knight errant was the declared enemy of the oppressor, the punisher of the injurious, and the patron of the weak. And as women were more exposed to injury, than men; and as ladies of rank and merit were, for reasons already given, the objects of veneration to all men of breeding; the true knight was ambitious, above all things, to appear the champion of the fair sex. To qualify himself for this honour, he was careful to acquire every accomplishment that could entitle him to their confidence: he was courteous, gentle, temperate, and chaste. He bound himself, by solemn vows, to the performance of those virtues: so that, while he acted with honour in his profession, a lady might commit herself to his care, without detriment to her character; he being in regard to those virtues as far above suspicion, as a clergyman is now. And, that women of fashion might confide in him with the more security, he commonly attached himself to some one lady, whom he declared to be the sole mistress of his affections, and to whom he swore inviolable constancy. Nothing is more ridiculous than Don Quixote's passion for Dulcinea del Toboso, as Cervantes has described it: and yet, it was in some sort necessary for every knight errant to have a nominal mistress: because, if he had not acknowledged any particular attachment, nor made any vows in consequence of it, his conduct, where women were concerned, might have been suspected; which would alone have disqualified him for what he justly thought the most honourable duty annexed to his profession. In a word, the chastity of a knight errant was to be no

less unimpeachable, than the credit of a merchant now is, or the courage of a soldier.

I have endeavoured to trace out the distinguishing features of that extraordinary character, a Knight Errant ; and to account for each of them, from the nature of the institution, and the manners of the times. The true Knight was religious, valiant, passionately fond of strange adventures, a lover of justice, a protector of the weak, a punisher of the injurious ; temperate, courteous, and chaste ; and zealous, and respectful, in his attentions to the fair sex. And this is the character assigned him in all those old romances and poems, that describe the adventures of chivalry.

Knight-errantry, however respectable in its first institution, soon became dangerous. The Gothick armour was a complete covering to the whole person : and under that disguise many warriors went through the world as knights errant, who were really nothing better than robbers ; and who, instead of being patrons of mankind, were pests of society. The true knight, therefore, thought himself bound in honour to inquire into the character of those who might appear in the same garb ; so that two knights, who were strangers to each other, could hardly meet without fighting. And we may warrantably suppose, that even the better sort of these wanderers would sometimes attack an innocent man, without necessity, in order to signalize their valour, and do honour to the lady of their affections. Nay in time it came to be a sufficient cause for combat, if the strange knight refused to acknowledge the beauty of his adversary's mistress superior to that of his own. The law, therefore, would find it necessary to interpose ; first, in subjecting chivalry to certain restraints, to which a knight would not willingly submit ; and, at last, in declaring the profession itself unlawful. Before the publication of Don Quixote, knight-errantry had been prohibited in several countries ; and was indeed become unnecessary, from the alterations, that (as will appear in the next paragraph) had

had been gradually introduced into the feudal system; as well as inconvenient, from the absurd conduct of the knights themselves.

Of all those, who repined at the encroachments of the feudal barons, the kings of Europe were the most impatient, and indeed the greatest sufferers. They could summon their subjects in arms to the field; but, having little to give them, could not easily keep them together for more than a few weeks. And, in time of peace, the royal power being almost confined to the royal territory, the greater barons were continually opposing the views of the sovereign, despising his authority, extorting from him new privileges, and counteracting the influence of the law. This was more or less the state of every feudal kingdom. The fashion of crusading was now over. And a feudal prince, unable to devise employment in foreign parts, for his turbulent nobility, was obliged, in self-defence, to exert all his power and policy, in controuling them at home; with a view to resume, if possible, some of those privileges that had been wrested from him. Many years were passed in struggles of this kind, between the kings and the nobles; to which nothing could put a period, but a change in the form of government. That happened, in some countries sooner, and in others later: but the kings at length prevailed, and the feudal system was broken in pieces. Its laws, however, and its manners, are still observable, in every European kingdom.

As the power of the nobles was contracted, that of the kings became more extensive. This might be unfavourable to the independence, or rather to the licentiousness, of the grandees: but it promoted peace, and re-established the authority of law. Society became more regular, and more secure. The knight-errant was no longer of any use. He was even found troublesome; and the law considered him as a vagrant.

But the old spirit of chivalry was not extinguished: and what remained of it was inflamed by the books called Romances, which  
were

were now common in Europe; and, being written in the vulgar tongues, and filled with marvellous adventures, could not fail to be eagerly sought after and read, at a time when books were rare, and men credulous.

To investigate all the causes that brought about the revival of letters, is now impossible. The ages immediately preceding this great event were profoundly ignorant; and few memorials of them remain. The crusades, bloody and unnatural as they were, seem to have given a new, and a favourable, impulse to the human soul. For the heroes of those wars, who lived to return home, brought along with them marvellous accounts of Asia, and of the misfortunes, triumphs, and other adventures that had there befallen them. Thus, it may be supposed, that the imagination of Europeans would be elevated, their memory stored with new ideas, and their curiosity awakened. The human mind, thus prepared, naturally betakes itself to invention. Or if we believe the dawn of modern literature to have been previous to, or coeval with, the first crusade, it is not absurd to imagine, that the same spirit of activity, however raised, which made men think of signalizing themselves in feats of arms at home, or in quest of adventures abroad, might also stimulate the mental powers, and cause genius to exert itself in new ways of thinking, as well as of acting. The wars of Thebes and of Troy are undoubtedly to be reckoned among the causes that gave rise to the literature of Greece. \*

Be this however as it will, certain it is, that, about the beginning of the twelfth century, or perhaps a little earlier, there appeared,

\* The Crusades were in many other respects beneficial to Europe. They enlarged mens ideas of commerce, improved their taste, and refined their manners; and occasioned new distributions of property; whereby the sovereigns acquired greater power, the laws became more effectual, the aristocracy grew less formidable, and the people by degrees emerged into liberty. These causes, by a slow and almost imperceptible energy continued through several ages, brought on at last a total reformation of the Feudal System.

in the country of Provence, a set of men, called **TROUBADOURS**, who are to be considered as the fathers of modern learning. That country, known of old by the name of *the Roman province*, is situated in a genial climate: and, from its vicinity to Marseilles, which was a Greek colony, and from having so long enjoyed the benefit of Roman arts and manners, we need not wonder, that, when all the rest of Europe was in a rude state, it should retain some traces of antient discipline. An obvious advantage it must have had, in this respect, over Rome; owing to its distance from the seat of Papal despotism: which in those days was friendly to ignorance; though in a later period, under Leo, it favoured the cultivation of arts and sciences.

The word *Troubadour*, in its etymological sense, differs not much from the Greek word *poet*; the one denoting an *inventor*, and the other a *maker*. In Italian, *trovare* signifies *to find*, or *to invent*; *trovatore* is a *finder*, *inventor*, or *composer of poetry*: and *trovatore* and *troubadour* are plainly of the same origin. The troubadours made verses in the Provençal tongue; which (as might be conjectured from the situation of the country) resembled partly the Italian, and partly the French, and is said to have had in it many Greek words and idioms, which it owed, no doubt, to the neighbouring city of Marseilles. It seems to have been the first modern tongue that was put in writing, or employed in composition. And the rank of some of those who composed in it (for many of the Troubadours were princes\*) and the wandering life which others of them led, made it quickly circulate through the western world.

The first poets of Greece sung their own verses: but the first Provençal bards only composed poems; leaving it to an inferior

\* Richard the First, king of England, and count of Poitou, was a generous patron of the Troubadours, and at length came to imitate them with no bad success. Two of his poems, with some other Provençal pieces, are very well versified in a volume intitled *RIMES*, printed for Mr. Dilly 1781; in which volume there is great store of poetical ideas, expressed with strength, elegance, and harmony.

order of men, called *Jongleurs*, to sing them. This at least was the general practice: though occasionally, no doubt, the former might sing, and the latter compose. Both were inclined to a wandering life; but the singer more professedly than the poet; though they sometimes went in company. The Jongleur studied to recommend himself by various arts; by playing on musical instruments, by imitating the song of birds, by jumping through hoops, and by all sorts of legerdemain. Hence, probably, our word *Juggler*.

No poets were ever held in higher esteem, than the Troubadours. Raimond the fifth, count of Provence, exempted them from taxes. They went through many nations; and, wherever they went, they found patrons and patronesses. The Ladies were particularly ambitious of being celebrated by them; and would rather submit to be teized with the importunities of their love, than venture by rejecting them to incur their hatred: for as the troubadour was extravagant in panegyrick, he could be equally so in satire, when he thought himself affronted or despised.—This passion for that sort of renown, which poets pretend to give, may be accounted for, perhaps, from the ignorance of letters, which then prevailed in all ranks, and especially among the fair sex. Bernard de Ventadour mentions it as one of the accomplishments of Queen Eleanor, who was married first to Louis the Seventh of France, and afterwards to Henry the Second of England, that she could read.\*

Considering the gallantry of the times, and the attention paid to these poets by the ladies, it is natural to suppose, that love would be a chief theme in their compositions. And so in fact it was. But this love, though in some instances it might be genuine, had so much formality in it, that I can hardly believe it to have been any thing else, for the most part, than a verbal parade of admiration and attachment, in which the heart had little concern, and which aimed at nothing further, than to secure the protection of the fair,

\* Literary History of the Troubadours, page 12.

and the noble. The Provençal poet went to the court of some prince or lord; where he was no sooner established, than he began to compose sonnets in praise of his patron's wife, and to feign, or to fancy, himself in love with her. This happened, not to one only, or to a few, but almost to the whole species of these adventurers; so that it would seem to have been the mode, and a thing of course. To unmarried ladies it does not appear, that much devotion was paid: I suppose, because they had little to bestow, in the way either of pecuniary, or of honorary, favour.

Petrarch's passion for Laura, though disinterested, seems to have been in some degree fictitious, or at least, not quite so serious a matter as many people imagine. "He was wretched to show he had wit," as the song says: he loved after the Provençal fashion: he wanted to make passionate verses; and Laura, being a beautiful lady, and a married one too, with a pretty romantick name, suited his poetical purposes as well, as Dulcinea del Toboso did the heroick views of Don Quixote. Had his heart been really engaged, he could not have gone on, from day to day, in the same strain of elegant and elaborate whining: a sincere passion would have allowed him neither time nor tranquillity for such amusement.—What is observed, in the old aphorism, of violent grief, that it is silent, and of slight sorrow, that it vents itself in words, will be found to hold true of many of our affections. Hammond was not in love, when he wrote his elegies; as I have been informed on good authority: and Young, while composing the most pathetic parts of the Night-thoughts, was as chearful as at other times. These are not the only instances that might be mentioned\*.

The

\* That Petrarch's passion was sincere, or such at least as gave him uneasiness for a considerable time, appears from a passage in an account of his life and character, written by himself in Latin prose, and prefixed to an edition of his works printed *Basil. apud Hen. Petri* 1554. But that it was of that permanent and overwhelming nature, which



The *Cicisbeism*, as it is called, of modern Italy, (a sort of romantic attention paid to married women by those who should not pay it) I do not pretend to understand: though I believe it to be a disgrace to the country, not only as it tends to the utter corruption of

is generally supposed, may justly be doubted, upon the same authority. He was, he says, once violently in love, when a young man; but it was *amor honestus*, an honourable, or a virtuous passion. Granting, that Laura (or Lauretta) the wife of Hugues de Sade was the object of it; and that the lover called it *honourable*, because it detached him from criminal connections; yet what evidence have we, that it continued with him (as some authors are pleased to affirm) to the end of his life? There is presumptive, nay there is positive, evidence of the contrary: and that he was less subject perhaps, than most men can pretend to be, to the tyranny of *the winged boy*.

The *presumptive* evidence is founded on the laborious life which he must have led in the pursuits of literature. His youth was employed in study, at a time when study was very difficult, from the want of books and of masters. He became the most learned man of his time. To him we are indebted for the preservation of some antient authors, whom he is said to have transcribed with his own hand. His works, in my edition of them, fill one thousand four hundred and fifty folio pages closely printed; whereof the Italian Sonnets are not much more than a twentieth part; the rest being in Latin; and one of his Latin pieces an Epick poem called *Africa*, almost as long as the *Eneid*. Is it credible, that a man of extreme sensibility, pining in hopeless love for *thirty, forty, or fifty* years, could be so zealous a student, and so voluminous a composer? His retirement at Valcluse was by no means devoted to love and Laura. There, says he, almost all the works I have published were completed, or begun, or planned: and so many they were, that even at these years they employ and fatigue me. *Diverticulum aliquod quasi portum quærens, repperi vallem perexiguam, sed solitariam atque amœnam, quæ Clausa dicitur, quindecim millibus ab Avinione distantem, ubi fontium rex omnium Sorga oritur. Captus loci dulcedine, libellos meos, et meipsum illuc transtuli. Longa erit historia, si pergam exequi quid ibi multos ac multos egerim per annos. Hæc est summa, quod quicquid fere opusculorum mihi exiit ibi vel actum, vel captum, vel conceptum est: quæ tam multa fuerunt, ut usque ad hanc ætatem me exerceant ac fatigent.* *Fr. Petrarcha; de origine sua, vita, et conversatione.*

The *positive* evidence we have in the following quotation from the same Treatise; in the third sentence of which quotation, for a reason that will occur to the learned reader, I take the liberty to expunge two words, and put one in their place.—*Amore acerrimo, sed unico, et honesto, in adolescentia laboravi; et diutius laborassem, nisi jam tepescentem ignem mors acerba, sed utilis, extinxisset. Libidinum me prorsus expertem dicere posse optarem quidem, sed si dicam mentiar; hoc secure dixerim, me, quanquam*

of manners; but also because it supplies a pretence for idleness, effeminacy, fauntering, gossiping, and insignificant prattle. But if this fashion arose from the bewitching influence of Petrarch's poetry, which has been affirmed by some writers, and is not improbable, there may be reason to think, that at first it was rather a foolish, or at most a selfish, than a criminal, connection.—Adelaide, viscountess of Baux, was extremely indulgent to the Troubadour Peter Vidal, as long as his passion was merely poetical: but when he had the presumption to kiss her one day in her sleep, she drove him from her presence, and would never after, even at the request of her husband, be reconciled to him. Peter, finding her inexorable, went and fell in love with another lady, whose name happened to be *Wolf*; and, dressing himself in a skin of the animal so called, submitted to the danger of being hunted for her sake. In this garb he was discovered by the dogs; who, entering with great alacrity into the frolick, gave chase, pursued him to the mountains, and were actually worrying him, when he was with difficulty rescued by the shepherds.

Vidal, however, though fantastick in love, was not in every thing ridiculous. His advice to a Jongleur is curious; and shows, *fervore ætatis et complexionis ad id raptum, vilitatem illam tamen semper animo execratum. Mox vero ad quadragesimum annum adpropinquans, dum adhuc et caloris satis esset, et virium, non solum AMOREM, sed ejus memoriam omnem sic abjeci, quasi nunquam fœminam aspexissem. Quod inter primas felicitates memoror, Deo gratias agens, qui me adhuc integrum et vigentem, tam vili et mihi semper odioso servitio liberavit. Sed ad alia procedo.*

Hieronymo Squarzacchi, in a life of Petrarch prefixed to the same collection of his writings, informs us, that the Lady's real name was Lauretta, and that the poet made it Laura. Thus altered, it supplies him with numberless allusions to the Laurel, and to the story of Apollo and Daphne. Might he not, in many of his Sonnets, have had allegorical references to the Poetical Laurel; which was offered him at one and the same time by deputies from France and Italy, and with which he was actually crowned at Rome? In this view, his love of fame and of poetry would happily coincide with his tenderness for Laura, and give peculiar warmth and elevation to such of his thoughts as might relate to any one of the three passions.

that,

that, though in those days there might be little learning in Europe, the principles of good breeding, and of elegant behaviour, were in some parts of it very well understood. \*

Love was not the only theme of the Provençal poets. They occasionally joined their voices to those of the pope, and the monks, and the kings of Europe, to rouse the spirit of crusading. Satire, religious and political, as well as personal, and little tales or novels, with portions of real history, and even theological controversy, were also interwoven in their compositions. But in every form their poetry pleased; and, by the industry of those who composed, and of those who sung it, obtained a very extensive circulation.

\* I beg leave to subjoin the concluding paragraph, as a specimen of this excellent piece. — “ Never condemn other jongleurs: those, who are severe on persons of their own profession, show a base and envious mind, and expose their own jealousy much more than the faults of their brethren. — If you are asked to relate what you have seen and heard in the world, be not too diffusive, but proceed by degrees; sound the disposition of your hearers, till you observe they relish your discourse: then speak of the brave lords you have met with, and of the ladies in the highest esteem; and endeavour to inspire those, who listen to you, with the love of virtue. If the company are persons of high rank, and of elevated minds, display, both in your countenance and voice, the eloquence which your subject inspires. Be distinct and grave in your manners; let your carriage be firm and graceful; and abstain from all mean and low expressions. Some jongleurs find fault with every thing, but take care to extol themselves highly: and such is their vanity and ignorance, that were they in the presence of the king himself, they would affect the free and familiar tone of men of importance. Do not imitate those; the more they are known, the less they are esteemed. For your part, whatever is your genius, your knowledge, or your wit, do not make a boast of it: be modest, and you will find persons enough who will set forth your merit and abilities. Avoid all excess: flee all bad company; but do not appear to despise any one; for the meanest and the worst person is most able to become your enemy; and they sometimes pursue those they hate, with such inveterate malice, as to injure them in the opinion of the worthy and the judicious. — While you are young and vigorous, recommend in your writings, and impress by your behaviour, the respect due to old age: And maintain continually this truth, that those, who frequent the company of persons, whose lives have been spent in virtue, will derive to themselves a lasting blessing and reward.” — See Mrs. Dobson’s *Literary History of the Troubadours*, pag. 338 — 349.

A book,

A book, or a poem, in a living language, was at this period an extraordinary appearance. All Europe attended to it. The Provençal tongue, and mode of writing, became fashionable: and the neighbouring nations wished to know, whether their languages could not also be applied to the same, or to similar purposes.

This was first attempted with success in Italy; where several men of great genius happened about this time to arise, whose practice and authority fixed the Italian tongue in a state not very different from its present. Among these were Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; who all flourished in the end of the thirteenth century, or in the beginning of the fourteenth. — Dante distinguished himself in poetry: and wrote his *Inferno*, *Paradiso*, and *Purgatorio*, in a bold, but extravagant style of fable: intermixing satire with his poetical descriptions and allegories; whereof many are highly finished, and in particular passages enforced with singular energy and simplicity of expression. — Petrarch composed many poems, letters, essays, and dialogues in Latin, which he thought the only durable tongue: for as to his Italian verses, he did not believe they could last, or be intelligible for a century. But in this he was mistaken greatly: his Latin works being now almost forgotten; while his Italian sonnets are still the admiration of Europe, for delicacy of sentiment, and elegance of style. Their merit was indeed thought to be so transcendent, that he alone was attended to, and his masters the Troubadours were neglected and forgotten. — Boccaccio's chief performance is called the *Decameron*. It is a series of novels; whereof some are grave, others comical, and many indecent. He supposes a number of men and women met together, at the time when a pestilence was ravaging Florence, and telling those stories for their mutual amusement. His imagination must have been unbounded: and so highly is his prose esteemed in Italy to this day, that a late author of that country \* declares it

\* *Vicende della Letteratura, del C. Denina.*

to be impossible, for the man who has not read Boccacio, to form an idea of the extent or energy of the Italian tongue.

The fourteenth century produced also the illustrious Geoffry Chaucer; who, though not the first who wrote in English, is the first of our great authors, and may be truly called the father of our language and literature. His writings are chiefly translations, or imitations, of the Provençal and Italian writers then known. But he has imitated and translated with the greatest latitude, and added many fine strokes of character, humour, and description: so that we ought to consider him as an original; since he does in fact exhibit, especially in his *Canterbury Tales*, a more natural picture of the English manners of that age, than is to be met with in any other writer. He did not, however, fix the English tongue, as his contemporaries Petrarch and Boccacio had fixed the Italian. Many of his words soon fell into disuse: and his language at present is not well understood, except by those who have taken some pains to study it. He died in the year fourteen hundred. Some of his poems, particularly his *Knight's Tale*, which is well modernized by Dryden, are written in the taste of Chivalry; but not in that extravagant mode of invention, which now began to display itself in the Spanish and French romances; and which was afterwards adopted, and adorned with every grace of language and of harmony, by Ariosto in Italy, and by Spenser in England.

The origin of the Old Romance, which, after this long historical deduction, we are now arrived at, has been already accounted for. It was one of the consequences of chivalry. The first writers in this way exhibited a species of fable, different from all that had hitherto appeared. They undertook to describe the adventures of those heroes who professed knight-errantry. The world was then ignorant and credulous, and passionately fond of wonderful adventures, and deeds of valour. They believed in giants, dwarfs, dragons, enchanted castles, and every imaginable species of necro-

mancy. These form the materials of the Old Romance. The knight errant was described as courteous, religious, valiant, adventurous, and temperate. Some enchanters befriended, and others opposed him. To do his mistress honour, and prove himself worthy of her, he was made encounter the warrior, hew down the giant, cut the dragon in pieces, break the spell of the necromancer, demolish the enchanted castle, fly through the air on wooden or winged horses; or, with some magician for his guide, to descend unhurt through the opening earth, and traverse the caves in the bottom of the ocean. He detected and punished the false knight, overthrew or converted the infidel, restored the exiled monarch to his dominions, and the captive damsel to her parents: he fought at the tournament, feasted in the hall, and bore a part in the warlike procession: or, when the enchanter who befriended his enemy prevailed, he did penance in the desert, or groaned in the dungeon; or, perhaps, in the shape of a horse or hart, grazed in the valley, till some other valiant knight broke the spell, and restored to him his form, his arms, and his freedom. At last, after innumerable toils, disasters, and victories, he married his mistress, and became a great lord, a prince, or perhaps an emperor.

It will appear, from this account, that nature, probability, and even possibility, were not much attended to, in those compositions. Yet with them all Europe was intoxicated: and in every nation, that had pretensions to a literary character, multitudes of them were written, some in verse, and others in prose. To give a list is unnecessary, and would be tedious. *Amadis de Gaul* was one of the first; and is, in the opinion of Cervantes, one of the best. Several others are mentioned, and characterised, by that excellent author, in his account of the purgation of *Don Quixote's* library.

While the taste continued for every thing that was incredible and monstrous, we may suppose, that true learning, and the natural simplicity of the Classics, would not be held in general estimation.

Accordingly, though the knowlege of Greek and Latin was now advancing apace in the western world, Homer, Virgil, Cicero, and all the most elegant authors, were much neglected. The first accounts, that circulated among us concerning the siege of Troy, seem to have been taken, not from Homer, but from Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, two writers in prose, who have given a fabulous and marvellous history of it: and, as late as the age of George Buchanan, our modern Latin poets, Vida excepted, were, if I mistake not, more ambitious to imitate Claudian, than Virgil, in their hexameters. Ovid, too, was a favourite author; partly on account of the astonishing fables of the *Metamorphosis*, and partly, no doubt, for the sake of his love-verses, so well adapted to the gallantry of this period. \*

The passion for romance was attended with other bad consequences. Men of warlike genius and warm fancy, charmed to infatuation with the supposed achievements of knights errant, were tempted to appear in that character; though the profession was now considered as a nuisance, and proscribed by law in some parts of Europe. This folly seems to have been most prevalent in Spain: which may be thus accounted for. The first Romances were written in the language of that kingdom. The Spaniards were then, as they are now, a valiant and enterprising people. And they had long been enslaved by the Moors from Africa, whom, after a seven hundred years war (according to the historians), and after fighting three thousand and seven hundred battles, they at last drove out of Spain. This produced many wonderful adventures; made them fierce, romantick, and haughty; and confirmed their attachment to their own religion, and their abhorrence of that of their enemies.

\* “ To avoid the raillery of those who mock my useles constancy, a thought occurs: I may feign, that I am favourably received. I shall be believed: for women are easily softened. *So says Ovid*, and all the gallant poets.” This passage is found in Arnaud Daniel, a Troubadour of the twelfth century. *Hist. of Troub.* p. 215.

But the final extirpation of chivalry and all its chimeras was now approaching. What laws and force could not accomplish, was brought about by the humour and satire of one writer. This was the illustrious Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. He was born at Madrid in the year one thousand five hundred and forty-nine. He seems to have had every advantage of education, and to have been a master in polite learning. But in other respects fortune was not very indulgent. He served many years in the armies of Spain, in no higher station, than that of a private soldier. In that capacity he fought at the battle of Lepanto, under Don John of Austria, and had the misfortune, or, as he rather thought, the honour, to lose his left hand. Being now disqualified for military service, he commenced author; and wrote many Dramatick pieces, which were acted with applause on the Spanish theatre, and acquired him both money and reputation. But want of economy and unbounded generosity dissipated the former: and he was actually confined in prison for debt, when he composed the first part of *The History of Don Quixote*; a work, which every body admires for its humour; but which ought also to be considered as a most useful performance, that brought about a great revolution in the manners and literature of Europe, by banishing the wild dreams of chivalry, and reviving a taste for the simplicity of nature. In this view, the publication of *Don Quixote* forms an important era in the history of mankind.

Don Quixote is represented as a man, whom it is impossible not to esteem for his cultivated understanding, and the goodness of his heart: but who, by poring night and day upon the old romances, had impaired his reason to such a degree, as to mistake them for history, and form the design of going through the world, in the character, and with the accoutrements, of a knight errant. His distempered fancy takes the most common occurrences for adventures similar to those he had read in his books of chivalry. And thus, the extravagance of those books being placed, as it were, in



the same groupe with the appearances of nature and the real business of life, the hideous disproportion of the former becomes so glaring by the contrast, that the most inattentive observer cannot fail to be struck with it. The person, the pretensions, and the exploits, of the errant knight, are held up to view in a thousand ridiculous attitudes. In a word, the humour and satire are irresistible; and their effects were instantaneous.

This work no sooner appeared, than chivalry vanished, as snow melts before the sun. Mankind awoke as from a dream. They laughed at themselves for having been so long imposed on by absurdity; and wondered they had not made the discovery sooner. It astonished them to find, that nature and good sense could yield a more exquisite entertainment, than they had ever derived from the most sublime phrenzies of chivalry. For, that this was indeed the case: that Don Quixote was more read, and more relished, than any other romance had ever been, we may infer, from the sudden and powerful effects it produced on the sentiments of mankind; as well as from the declaration of the author himself; who tells us, that upwards of twelve thousand copies of the first part were sold, before the second could be got ready for the press:—an amazing rapidity of sale, at a time when the readers and purchasers of books were but an inconsiderable number compared to what they are in our days. “The very children, (says he) handle it, boys read it, men understand, and old people applaud, the performance. It is no sooner laid down by one, than another takes it up; some struggling, and some entreating, for a sight of it. In fine, (continues he) this history is the most delightful, and the least prejudicial, entertainment, that ever was seen; for, in the whole book, there is not the least shadow of a dishonourable word, nor one thought unworthy of a good catholick.”\*

\* Third volume of Don Quixote, near the beginning.

Don Quixote occasioned the death of the Old Romance, and gave birth to the New. Fiction henceforth divested herself of her gigantick size, tremendous aspect, and frantick demeanour; and, descending to the level of common life, conversed with man as his equal, and as a polite and chearful companion. Not that every subsequent Romance-writer adopted the plan, or the manner, of Cervantes: but it was from him they learned to avoid extravagance, and to imitate nature. And now probability was as much studied, as it had been formerly neglected.

But before I proceed to the New Romance, on which I shall be very brief, it is proper just to mention a species of Romantick narrative, which cannot be called either Old or New, but is a strange mixture of both. Of this kind are the *Grand Cyrus*, *Clelia*, and *Cleopatra*; each consisting of ten or a dozen large volumes, and pretending to have a foundation in antient history. In them, all facts and characters, real and fabulous; and all systems of policy and manners, the Greek, the Roman, the Feudal, and the modern, are jumbled together and confounded: as if a painter should represent Julius Cesar drinking tea with Queen Elizabeth, Jupiter, and Dulcinea del Toboso, and having on his head the laurel wreath of antient Rome, a suit of Gothick armour on his shoulders, laced ruffles at his wrist, a pipe of tobacco in his mouth, and a pistol and tomahawk stuck in his belt. But I should go beyond my depth, if I were to criticize any of those enormous compositions. For, to confess the truth, I never had patience to read one half of one of the volumes; nor met with a person, who could give me any other account of them, than that they are intolerably tedious, and unspeakably absurd.

The New Romance may be divided into the *Serious* and the *Comick*: and each of these kinds may be variously subdivided.

I. 1. Of *Serious* Romances, some follow *the historical arrangement*; and, instead of beginning, like Homer and Virgil, in the middle

middle of the subject \*, give a continued narrative of the life of some one person, from his birth to his establishment in the world, or till his adventures may be supposed to have come to an end. Of this sort is *Robinson Crusoe*. The account commonly given of that well-known work is as follows.

Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch mariner, happened, by some accident which I forget, to be left in the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandes in the South Seas. Here he continued four years alone, without any other means of supporting life, than by running down goats, and killing such other animals as he could come at. To defend himself from danger during the night, he built a house of stones rudely put together, which a gentleman, who had been in it, (for it was extant when Anson arrived there) described to me as so very small, that one person could with difficulty crawl in, and stretch himself at length. Selkirk was delivered by an English vessel, and returned home. A late French writer says, he had become so fond of the savage state, that he was unwilling to quit it. But that is not true. The French writer either confounds the real story of Selkirk with a fabulous account of one Philip Quarl, written after *Robinson Crusoe*, of which it is a paltry imitation; or wilfully misrepresents the fact, in order to justify, as far as he is able, an idle conceit, which, since the time of Rousseau, has been in fashion amongst infidel and affected theorists on the continent, that savage life is most natural to us, and that the more a man resembles a brute in his mind, body, and behaviour, the happier he becomes, and the more perfect. — Selkirk was advised to get his story put in writing, and published. Being illiterate himself, he told every thing he could remember to Daniel Defoe, a professed author of considerable note; who, instead of doing justice to the poor man, is said to have applied these materials to his own use, by making them the groundwork of *Robinson Crusoe*; which he

\* Essay on Poetry and Music. Part i. chap. 5.

soon after published, and which, being very popular, brought him a good deal of money.

Some have thought, that a lovetale is necessary to make a romance interesting. But Robinson Crusoe, though there is nothing of love in it, is one of the most interesting narratives that ever was written; at least in all that part which relates to the desert island: being founded on a passion still more prevalent than love, the desire of self-preservation; and therefore likely to engage the curiosity of every class of readers, both old and young, both learned and unlearned.

I am willing to believe, that Defoe shared the profits of this publication with the poor seaman: for there is an air of humanity in it, which one would not expect from an author who is an arrant cheat. In the preface to his second volume, he speaks feelingly enough of the harm done him by those who had abridged the first, in order to reduce the price. “The injury, says he, which these  
“men do to the *proprietors* of works, is a practice all honest men  
“abhor: and they believe they may challenge them to show the  
“difference between that, and robbing on the highway, or break-  
“ing open a house. If they cannot show any difference in the  
“crime, they will find it hard to show, why there should be any  
“difference in the punishment.” Is it to be imagined, that any man of common prudence would talk in this way, if he were conscious, that he himself might be proved guilty of that very dishonesty which he so severely condemns?

Be this however as it may, for I have no authority to *affirm* any thing on either side, Robinson Crusoe must be allowed, by the most rigid moralist, to be one of those novels, which one may read, not only with pleasure, but also with profit. It breathes throughout a spirit of piety and benevolence: it sets in a very striking light, as I have elsewhere observed, the importance of the mechanick arts, which they, who know not what it is to be with-  
out

out them, are so apt to undervalue: it fixes in the mind a lively idea of the horrors of solitude, and, consequently, of the sweets of social life, and of the blessings we derive from conversation, and mutual aid: and it shows, how, by labouring with one's own hands, one may secure independence, and open for one's self many sources of health and amusement. I agree, therefore, with Rousseau, that this is one of the best books that can be put in the hands of children. — The style is plain, but not elegant, nor perfectly grammatical: and the second part of the story is tiresome.

2. A second species of the Modern Serious Romance is that, which follows *the poetical arrangement*; and, in order to shorten the time of the action, begins in the middle of the story. Such, partly, are *Sir Charles Grandison*, and *Clarissa Harlowe*, by Mr. Richardson. That author has adopted a plan of narrative of a peculiar kind: the persons, who bear a part in the action, are themselves the relaters of it. This is done by means of letters, or epistles; wherein the story is continued from time to time, and the passions freely expressed, as they arise from every change of fortune, and while the persons concerned are supposed to be ignorant of the events that are to follow. And thus, the several agents are introduced in their turns, speaking, or, which is the same thing in this case, writing, suitably to their respective feelings, and characters: so that the fable is partly Epick, and partly Dramatick. There are some advantages in this form of narrative. It prevents all anticipation of the catastrophe; and keeps the reader in the same suspense, in which the persons themselves are supposed to be: and it pleases further, by the varieties of style, suited to the different tempers and sentiments of those who write the letters. But it has also its inconveniencies. For, unless the fable be short and simple, this mode of narration can hardly fail to run out into an extravagant length, and to be encumbered with repetitions. And indeed, Richardson himself, with all his powers of invention, is apt to be tedious,

tedious, and to fall into a minuteness of detail, which is often unnecessary. His pathetick scenes, too, are overcharged, and so long continued, as to wear out the spirits of the reader. Nor can it be denied, that he has given too much prudery to his favourite women, and something of pedantry or finicalness to his favourite men.—Clementina was, no doubt, intended as a pattern of female excellence: but, though she may claim veneration as a saint, it is impossible to love her as a woman. And Grandison, though both a good and a great character, is in every thing so perfect, as in many things to discourage imitation; and so distant, and so formal, as to forbid all familiarity, and, of course, all cordial attachment. Alworthy is as good a man as he: but his virtue is purely human; and, having a little of our own weakness in it, and assuming no airs of superiority, invites our acquaintance, and engages our love.

For all this, however, Richardson is an author of uncommon merit. His characters are well drawn, and distinctly marked; and he delineates the operation of the passions with a picturesque accuracy, which discovers great knowledge of human nature. His moral sentiments are profound and judicious; in wit and humour he is not wanting; his dialogue is sometimes formal; but many of his conversation-pieces are executed with elegance and vivacity. For the good tendency of his writings he deserves still higher praise; for he was a man of unaffected piety, and had the improvement of his fellow-creatures very much at heart.

Yet, like most other novel-writers, he represents some of his wicked characters as more agreeable than was necessary to his plan; which may make the example dangerous. I do not think, that an author of fable, in either prose or verse, should make his bad characters completely bad: for, in the first place, that would not be natural, as the worst of men have generally some good in them: and, secondly, that would hurt his design, by making the tale less captivating; as the history of a person, so very worthless as to have

not one good quality, would give disgust or horror, instead of pleasure. But, on the other hand, when a character, like Richardson's *Lovelace*, whom the reader ought to abominate for his crimes, is adorned with youth, beauty, eloquence, wit, and every other intellectual and bodily accomplishment, it is to be feared, that thoughtless young men may be tempted to imitate, even while they disapprove, him. Nor is it a sufficient apology to say, that he is punished in the end. The reader knows, that the story is a fiction: but he knows too, that such talents and qualities, if they were to appear in real life, would be irresistably engaging; and he may even fancy, that a character so highly ornamented must have been a favourite of the author. Is there not, then, reason to apprehend, that some readers will be more inclined to admire the gay profligate, than to fear his punishment?—Achilles in Homer, and Macbeth in Shakespeare, are not without great and good qualities, to raise our admiration, and make us take concern in what befalls them. But no person is in any danger of being perverted by their example: their criminal conduct being described and directed in such a manner, by the art of the poet, as to show, that it is hateful in itself, and necessarily productive of misery, both to themselves, and to mankind.

I may add, that the punishment of *Lovelace* is a death, not of infamy, according to our notions, but rather of honour; which surely he did not deserve: and that the immediate cause of it is, not his wickedness, but some inferiority to his antagonist in the use of the small sword. With a little more skill in that exercise, he might, for any thing that appears in the story, have triumphed over *Clarissa's* avenger, as he had done over herself, and over the censure of the world. Had his crime been represented as the necessary cause of a series of mortifications, leading him gradually down to infamy, ruin, and despair, or producing by probable means an exemplary repentance, the fable would have been more useful in a moral view, and perhaps more interesting. And for the execu-

tion of such a plan the genius of Richardson seems to me to have been extremely well formed.—These remarks are offered, with a view rather to explain my own ideas of fable, than to detract from an author, who was an honour to his country, and of whose talents and virtues I am a sincere admirer.

His Epistolary manner has been imitated by many novel-writers; particularly by Rousseau in his *New Eloisa*; a work, not more remarkable for its eloquence, which is truly great, than for its glaring and manifold inconsistencies. For it is full of nature and extravagance, of sound philosophy and wild theory, of useful instruction and dangerous doctrine.

II. 1. The second kind of the New Romance is the *Comick*; which, like the first, may, with respect to the arrangement of events, be subdivided into the *Historical* and the *Poetical*.

Of the Historical form are the novels of Marivaux, and *Gil Blas* by M. le Sage. These authors abound in wit and humour; and give natural descriptions of present manners, in a simple, and very agreeable, style. And their works may be read without danger; being for the most part of a moral tendency. Only Le Sage appears to have had a partiality for cheats and sharpers: for these are people whom he introduces often; nor does he always paint them in the odious colours, that properly belong to all such pests of society. Even his hero Gil Blas he has made too much a rogue: which, as he is the relater of his own story, has this disagreeable effect, that it conveys to us, all the while we read him, an idea that we are in bad company, and deriving entertainment from the conversation of a man whom we cannot esteem.

Smollet follows the same historical arrangement in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*: two performances, of which I am sorry to say, that I can hardly allow them any other praise, than that they are humourous and entertaining. He excels, however, in drawing the characters of seamen; with whom in his younger days he



he had the best opportunities of being acquainted. He seems to have collected a vast number of merry stories; and he tells them with much vivacity and energy of expression. But his style often approaches to bombast; and many of his humourous pictures are exaggerated beyond all bounds of probability. And it does not appear that he knew how to contrive a regular fable, by making his events mutually dependent, and all co-operating to one and the same final purpose.—On the morality of these novels I cannot compliment him at all. He is often inexcusably licentious. Profligates, bullies, and misanthropes, are among his favourite characters. A duel he seems to have thought one of the highest efforts of human virtue; and playing dextrously at billiards a very genteel accomplishment. Two of his pieces, however, deserve to be mentioned with more respect. Count Fathom, though an improbable tale, is pleasing, and upon the whole not immoral, though in some passages very indelicate. And Sir Launcelot Greaves, though still more improbable, has great merit; and is truly original in the execution, notwithstanding that the hint is borrowed from Don Quixote.

2. The second species of the New Comick Romance is that which, in the arrangement of events, follows the poetical order; and which may properly enough be called the Epick Comedy, or rather the Comick Epick poem: *Epick*, because it is narrative; and *Comick*, because it is employed on the business of common life, and takes its persons from the middle and lower ranks of mankind.

This form of the Comick Romance has been brought to perfection in England by Henry Fielding; who seems to have possessed more wit and humour\*, and more knowledge of mankind, than any

\* The great Lord Lyttelton, after mentioning several particulars of Pope, Swift, and other wits of that time, when I asked some question relating to the Author of Tom Jones, began his answer with these words, "Henry Fielding, I assure you, had more wit and more humour than all the persons we have been speaking of put together." This testimony of his Lordship, who was intimately acquainted with Fielding, ought not to be forgotten.

other person of modern times, Shakespeare excepted; and whose great natural abilities were refined by a classical taste, which he had acquired by studying the best authors of antiquity: though it cannot be denied, that he appears on some occasions to have been rather too ostentatious, both of his learning, and of his wit.

Some have said, that Joseph Andrews is the best performance of Fielding. But its chief merit is parson Adams; who is indeed a character of masterly invention, and, next to Don Quixote, the most ludicrous personage that ever appeared in romance. This work, though full of exquisite humour, is blamable in many respects. Several passages offend by their indelicacy. And it is not easy to imagine, what could induce the author to add to the other faults of his hero's father Wilson the infamy of lying and cowardice; and then to dismiss him, by very improbable means, to a life of virtuous tranquillity, and endeavour to render him upon the whole a respectable character. Some youthful irregularities, rather hinted at than described, owing more to imprudence and unlucky accident than to confirmed habits of sensuality, and followed by inconvenience, perplexity, and remorse, their natural consequences, may, in a comick tale, be assigned even to a favourite personage, and, by proper management, form a very instructive part of the narration: but crimes, that bring dishonour, or that betray a hard heart, or an injurious disposition, should never be fixed on a character who the poet or novel-writer means to recommend to our esteem. On this principle, Fielding might be vindicated in regard to all the censurable conduct of Tom Jones, provided he had been less particular in describing it: and, by the same rule, Smollet's system of youthful profligacy, as exemplified in some of his libertines, is altogether without excuse.

*Tom Jones* and *Amelia* are Fielding's best performances; and the most perfect, perhaps, of their kind in the world. The fable of the latter is entirely poetical, and of the true epick species; beginning

ning in the middle of the action, or rather as near the end as possible, and introducing the previous occurrences, in the form of a narrative episode. Of the former, the introductory part follows the historical arrangement; but the fable becomes strictly poetical, as soon as the great action of the piece commences, that is, if I mistake not, immediately after the sickness of Alworthy: for, from that period, the incidents proceed in an uninterrupted series to the final event, which happens about two months after.

Since the days of Homer, the world has not seen a more artful Epick fable. The characters and adventures are wonderfully diversified: yet the circumstances are all so natural, and rise so easily from one another, and co-operate with so much regularity in bringing on, even while they seem to retard, the catastrophe, that the curiosity of the reader is kept always awake, and, instead of flagging, grows more and more impatient as the story advances, till at last it becomes downright anxiety. And when we get to the end, and look back on the whole contrivance, we are amazed to find, that of so many incidents there should be so few superfluous; that in such variety of fiction there should be so great probability; and that so complex a tale should be so perspicuously conducted, and with perfect unity of design.—These remarks may be applied either to *Tom Jones* or to *Amelia*: but they are made with a view to the former chiefly; which might give scope to a great deal of criticism, if I were not in haste to conclude the subject. Since the time of Fielding, who died in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four, the Comick Romance, as far as I am acquainted with it, seems to have been declining apace, from simplicity and nature, into improbability and affectation.

Let not the usefulness of Romance-writing be estimated by the length of my discourse upon it. Romances are a dangerous recreation. A few, no doubt, of the best may be friendly to good taste and good morals; but far the greater part are unskilfully written,

and tend to corrupt the heart, and stimulate the passions. A habit of reading them breeds a dislike to history, and all the substantial parts of knowledge; withdraws the attention from nature, and truth; and fills the mind with extravagant thoughts, and too often with criminal propensities. I would therefore caution my young reader against them: or, if he must, for the sake of amusement, and that he may have something to say on the subject, indulge himself in this way now and then, let it be sparingly, and seldom.

ON THE  
ATTACHMENTS of KINDRED.\*

**M**ARRIAGE might be proved to be natural from its universality: for no nation has yet been discovered, where under one form or other it did not take place. Whether this be the effect of a law prescribed in the beginning by the Creator, and circulated by tradition through all the tribes of mankind: or, which amounts to the same thing, whether this be the result of natural passions co-operating with human reason: certain it is, that, even among savages, and where there was hardly any trace of government or art, and none at all of literature, men and women have been found, living together in domestick union, and providing necessaries for their children, and for each other.

In the lower world of animals, the union of sexes is temporary: the passions that prompt to it being periodical, and the young soon

\* There are modern authors, who, from an excessive admiration of the Greek policy, seem to have formed erroneous opinions in regard to some of the points touched on in this Discourse. With a view to those opinions, the Discourse was written several years ago. Afterwards, when a book called *Thelyphthora* appeared, I had thoughts of enlarging these remarks, so as to make them comprehend an examination of it. This the Authors of the *Monthly Review* rendered unnecessary, by giving a very ingenious, learned, and decisive confutation of that profligate system. I therefore publish my Essay, as it was at first written: satisfied, that Mr. Madan's Book, whatever private immoralities it may promote among the licentious and ignorant, will have no weight with the publick; nor deserve further animadversion, unless he should subjoin to it, as an appendix, or premise, by way of introduction, (what indeed seems wanting to complete his plan), an argument to prove, that the only true religion is the Turkish, and that of all forms of policy a free government is the worst. For, as the world is now constituted, the scheme of this Reverend Projector (REVEREND!—it is, it seems, even so!) is not compatible with any other political establishment, than that of Mahometan Despotism.

in a condition to live independent. While this union lasts, the male and female, of certain tribes, are directed, by the instinct of their nature, to be mutually assistant to their young, and to one another. But, when the young are able to take care of themselves, it happens for the most part, that the family breaks up; and parents and offspring know each other no more: and, till the return of the season appointed by the Author of nature for its commencement, the passion founded on diversity of sex is entirely over. Nor, even when that season returns, do those that were formerly connected seek to renew the connection; and the following attachment is, like the preceding, fortuitous. This, with a few exceptions, appears to be the ordinary course of things among those creatures, whose union most resembles that which prevails in the human species. In some other tribes, the connection is still more temporary, and the young are left to the care of the mother; the male being equally, and totally, inattentive, both to his mate, and to her offspring.

But with man the case is very different. Human infants are of all animals the most helpless. The tenderest care is necessary to prevent their perishing; and that must be long continued, before they can preserve themselves from danger: nay years must pass away, before they have acquired such knowledge, or dexterity, as enables them to provide for themselves. A savage, notwithstanding his hardy frame, and the fewness of his wants, can hardly be supposed capable of supporting himself by his own industry, for the first eight or ten years of his life: and in civil society, the term of education ought to be, and the period of helplessness must be, considerably longer. And if, before this period is over, children be left destitute of those friends, who were connected with them by the ties of blood, they will be indebted for their preservation to the humanity of the stranger.

Now

Now man, being endowed with reflection and foresight, must be sensible of all this. Being, moreover, compassionate in his nature; and having that affection to offspring, whereof many brutes are not destitute, he cannot but consider himself as under an obligation to take care of that helpless infant, whom he has been the means of bringing into the world. And this, together with the tenderness, wherewith it is natural for him to regard the mother of his child, would incline him, even of his own accord, and previously to the restraints of human law, to live for some time with his child and its mother, and give them that aid, whereof they now stand so much in need.

We naturally contract a liking to those, who have long been the objects of our beneficence, especially when we consider them as dependent on us: and it is further natural, for persons who have lived long together, to be unwilling to part. There is something too, as Lucretius well observes \*, in the looks and smiles of children, that has a peculiar efficacy in softening the heart of man. The father, therefore, even though a savage, who had once taken up his abode with his infant and its mother, would probably become more and more attached to both: and the woman and he, being mutually serviceable to each other, would contract a mutual liking, more durable than that which arises from mere difference of sex; and look upon themselves as united by ties of friendship and of gratitude. That their connection would continue is, therefore, more probable, than that it would be dissolved: and, long before the first child was in a condition to shift for itself, a second, and a third, perhaps, would have a claim to their parental care, and give additional weight to every one of those motives, which had hitherto determined them to live together.

\* ——— Puerique parentum

Blanditiis facile ingenium fregere superbum. Lib. v. vers. 1016.

From this view of things; and if it be considered further, that, the more we advance in years, the more we become inclined to a stationary life; it seems not unreasonable to infer, that, even among savages, if they were not utterly brutal, the union of the sexes, however slight the cause that first gave rise to it, might have a tendency to last, not merely for a day, or a year, but for many years, and perhaps till death. And thus the idea of marriage would become prevalent; that is, of an union for life of one man with one woman, for their mutual benefit, and for that of their children. And, as soon as government was formed, the salutary effects, both publick and private, of such an institution, would be too conspicuous, not to procure for it the sanction of positive laws.

This deduction, though it may seem to be inferred *a priori* from the nature of man, is not wholly conjectural. Many facts might be quoted to confirm it, from the history of unpolished nations, and from the sentiments of the vulgar throughout the world. Among the Germans of old, and all those northern tribes who destroyed the Roman empire; among the antient Egyptians, Greeks\*, and Romans; and among the original natives of America, marriage was established, polygamy unknown, and adultery considered as a crime. The love of children and kindred is every where, among the vulgar, a most powerful principle: and in all the nations we have heard of, that were not sunk in the grossest barbarity, Genealogy is considered as a matter of general concern. But a regard to genealogy, the love of kindred, natural affection

\* If it be true, that, on certain emergencies, when many of their people had been destroyed by war or other calamities, some of the Grecian states granted a toleration to the men to marry more than one wife each, it cannot be said, that polygamy was *unknown* to them. But this was never a general practice among that people. Marriage they considered as an union of one man with one woman. When Herodotus says, that Anaxandridas the Lacedemonian had two wives, he remarks, that it was contrary to the custom of the Lacedemonians. See *Potter's Antiquities of Greece*, book 4. chap. 11.



to children, and punishments denounced by law on polygamy and adultery, could never take place, except among those, who have both an idea of marriage, and a respect for it.

In fact, that perversion of conduct and principle, which bids defiance to every thing that is sacred in the matrimonial contract, and hardens the heart against the endearments of natural affection, is seldom known either in savage, or in common life; but is more apt to take its rise among those of the higher ranks, whom luxury, inattention, and flattery have corrupted. If the example that is set by such persons were to be followed by the body of a people, friendship and love would be at an end; self-interest and sensuality would detach individuals from their country, and from one another; every house would be divided against itself, and every man against his neighbour; the very idea of publick good would be lost, because a man would see nothing in the world, but himself, that was worth contending for: and all the charities of domestick life, the great humanizers of the heart of man, and the purest sources of sublunary joy, would be despised and forgotten.

For suppose marriage abolished: or suppose, for it is the same thing, that its laws are to be universally disregarded: is it not self-evident, that the forming of families, and the attachments of consanguinity, together with all decency and order, would be abolished, or disregarded, at the same time? Nay, industry would be abolished too: for what is a greater, or more honourable, incitement to industry, than the desire of doing good to friends and kindred? But, in the case supposed, there would be no such thing as kindred; and the condition of mankind would resemble that of wild beasts: with this difference, however, that our genius for contrivance, our sensibility, and our capacity of wickedness, would render us a thousand times more wretched, and more detestable.

I have endeavoured to account for the general prevalence of the matrimonial union, by proving it to be the result of human passions.

co-operating with human reason. It promotes the happiness of the individual, by means the most friendly to the social and sympathetic nature of man. It must, therefore, promote the publick weal; both because the publick is made up of individuals; and also, because, by this institution, the race of men is continued from age to age, in a way, not only consistent with social affection, decency, industry, and patriotism, but tending in an eminent degree to encourage all these virtues. Without it, a few gloomy and beastly savages might exist: but of all government and good order, and of every thing that is elegant, praiseworthy, or comfortable in life, it is to be considered as the foundation.

Will it be objected, that marriage may have been the cause of misery to some individuals? Granting that it has; and that, when it was so, the persons concerned were never themselves to blame, (which is granting more than any rational opponent would require) — this is only one evidence, of what is too plain to need any, that in the present world nothing can be completely good which is tainted with human imperfection. Medicine, philosophy, liberty, and religion, are good things: yet medicine has killed, as well as cured; and by philosophy men have been led into projects that ended in ruin: free governments have fallen into anarchy, and moderate monarchies into despotism: religion itself may be lost in superstition, and uncharitableness and cruelty are the consequence. Nay, to come to more familiar instances, the ax may wound the hand of the most skilful mechanick; ships guided by the best pilot may be wrecked; bodily exercise may produce fever, and bodily rest may bring on more fatal maladies; tares spring up with the corn; and men have been poisoned, while they thought only of allaying their hunger and thirst. But does it follow, that eating, and drinking, and agriculture, are pernicious; that bodily exercise and bodily rest are both to be avoided; that art, and science, and government, and religion, are detrimental to human happiness?

If nothing is valuable, but what has no mixture of evil, then there is nothing in this world of any value; and life itself, and all the comforts of life, are insignificant things.

Nor let it be supposed, that I mean by these reasonings to insinuate, that it is every man's duty to enter into this union. By evincing its importance to publick and private good, we do indeed prove, that every man ought to reverence the institution and its laws, and that it is the duty of all persons in authority to give the greatest encouragement to it, and to disallow every practice that tends to bring it into disrepute. But it cannot be the duty of any person to enter into this state, whose circumstances or way of life would render it imprudent to do so; or who is disqualified for it, either by want of inclination, or by such perversities of mind or infirmities of body, as might make it impossible for him to be an agreeable associate. In regard to a connection, whereon the happiness of life so essentially depends, we should be permitted to judge for ourselves, and be determined by our own free-will. We have heard indeed of laws in some countries, commanding all the citizens to marry; but it seems to have been bad policy: for neither happiness to the parties, nor good education to their children, could ever be expected from forced alliances. In matters of this kind, it is better to allure, than to compel. And that might be done with good success, if licentious behaviour were always the object of legal animadversion, and always followed by sensible inconvenience; and if particular advantages were annexed to the condition of those who had quitted the state of celibacy. In either of these respects, I cannot pay great compliments to the virtue, or to the wisdom, of latter times. Indeed, as to the first, it may be said, *Quid leges sine moribus?* What avail good laws, when the manners are evil? And, as to the second, I know not, whether any modern people have ever thought it worth their while to imitate that part of the Roman policy, which allotted certain privileges to the parent

parent of three children, and determined, not by their age, but by the number of their children, the precedency of consuls and senators; or that similar institution of the Athenian commonwealth, which required, that a citizen should, by being married, be supposed to have given security for his good behaviour, before he could be honoured with the command of an army, or any other publick trust.

While the manners of a people are tolerably pure; while industry is encouraged, and no unreasonable taxes are laid upon the necessities of life, matrimony is generally found to flourish, even though no peculiar advantages are annexed to it by the legislature. For the motives to this union are both natural, and strong. They may be reduced to the following. 1. That instinct, which tends to the continuation of the species; and which, being common to all animals, has nothing in it characteristical of human nature. 2. A preference of one person to another, founded on a real or fancied superiority in mind, or body, or both; which, as it implies comparison, and a taste for beauty, as well as the admiration of intellectual and moral excellence, must be supposed to be peculiar to rational minds. The passion, thus arising from the view of agreeable qualities in another, is commonly called Love. To the instinct formerly mentioned it imparts a delicacy, whereof inferior natures are not susceptible; and from the same instinct it derives a vivacity, whereby it is distinguished from all the forms and degrees of friendship, that may take place between persons of the same sex. 3. Benevolence, Goodwill, or a desire to make the beloved person happy, is a third motive to this union. This may seem to be the same with the Love just now mentioned: but we must distinguish them in science, because they are not always united in nature. When, for example, the passion that springs from diversity of sex, and is refined and heightened by the admiration of agreeable qualities, aims at its own gratification, although with ruin to the admired object; or when, by success, it is transformed into indifference or hatred; such a passion,

sion, though it may be called Love, has surely nothing of goodwill in it: for if it partook of this affection, the circumstance alluded to, by blending it with gratitude, pity, and other tender emotions, would make it more benevolent, and more generous, than it was before. 4. The love of offspring may be considered as a fourth motive: and a regard to one's own happiness as a fifth.—All these principles of conduct are natural to man; and, when united, form a passion which does him honour, and seems to promise him happiness. But if one or more of them be wanting, an alliance founded on the others will be more or less unnatural; according as the generous and rational principles are less or more predominant.

Now, these propensities being natural to man, and tending to produce the relation we speak of, it follows, that this relation must be natural to him; or, in other words, that Providence, in giving him these propensities, intended, that he should form the connection to which they lead. And for this, human beings are still further qualified, by the peculiar characters of the two sexes. The one being of a more delicate make, and withal particularly inclined and adapted to what may be called the internal administration of a family; and the other of a hardier frame, and more enterprising genius, and fit for defending a family from external injury: their respective abilities form, when united, a complete system of the powers essential to domestick policy. There are many household duties, for which nature has not qualified the man: and many offices, both domestick and civil, whereof the woman is not capable. In a word, the two sexes are natural associates; feminine weakness being compensated by masculine strength, and what is harsh in the male character by the delicacy of the female: and, in general, the peculiar talents of the one sex being a supplement to the peculiar imperfections of the other.—It is true, we sometimes meet with a womanish man, and with a mannish woman. But both are awkward to a degree that proves them to be unnatural: and the words,

whereby we denote those characters, are terms of scorn and dislike. The name *virago* conveys the idea of a disagreeable woman; and *effeminate*, applied to one of the other sex, denotes a contemptible man.—I might add, that the very dress of the one does not become the other; and that nature has established a great difference in their voices, that of a man being eight notes deeper or graver than that of a woman. Cicero distinguishes feminine from manly beauty, calling the former *venustas*, and the latter *dignitas*: and indeed, at Rome, as the men were almost continually in the open air, and exposed, with their heads uncovered, to the sun of a warm climate, their complexion, and cast of features, must have differed very much from that of the women, who were for the most part within doors\*. And with us, and in every other civilized country, many of those outward accomplishments, that become a woman, would not be graceful in a man; and those defects that are pardonable, and sometimes pleasing, in the one, would in the other be intolerable. That vivacity, for example, which is not blamed in a man, might be impudence in a woman; and that timidity, which detracts nothing from the female character, would make a man not only ridiculous, but infamous.

I will not enlarge further on this topick. It is sufficiently manifest, that a man and a woman are different characters, and formed for different employments; and are, each of them, when united, more complete animals, (if I may so speak) and have the means of happiness more in their power, than when separate. Nothing more needs be said to prove, that the matrimonial union is natural and beneficial.

By this union, Providence seems to have intended the accomplishment of these very important purposes. First, the Continuation of the human race in a way consistent with virtue, decency, and good government. Secondly, the Training up of human

\* See Essay on Imagination. Chap. II. Sect. iv. § 1.

creatures for the several duties incumbent upon them as rational and moral beings. And thirdly, the happiness of the persons who form this connection.

Some questions here occur, on which mankind are not unanimous, and which, therefore, it may be proper to examine. I. It may be asked, Whether it is according to nature, that the married persons should be only two, one man and one woman: II. Whether the matrimonial union should last through the whole of life: III. Whether the rearing and educating of children should be left to the parents, or provided for by the publick.

I. The first question may be otherwise expressed thus: Is Polygamy lawful? We may imagine two sorts of polygamy: the first, when one woman has at one time two or more husbands; the second, when one man has at one time two or more wives. The former is said to prevail in the kingdom of Thibet, in the East Indies; but is so very uncommon, that we need not take particular notice of it; especially, as to both sorts the same arguments may be applied, which I am now going to apply to the latter. The former is indeed liable to other objections of a peculiar nature: but I do not care to specify them; and besides, they are obvious.

Is it then right, that one man should at one time have more than one wife? I answer, No: and these are my reasons.

I. All men have a right to happiness; and it has been shown, that Providence intended, by the union of the sexes, to promote the happiness of mankind, as well as some other important purposes. Further, those propensities, that prompt to this union, are common to all men; so that nature does not seem to have intended it for one man rather than another. All therefore have an equal right to it. Consequently, it is not lawful to deprive an innocent person of this privilege: which, however, would necessarily be the case, if polygamy were to prevail. For the number of males that are born is found to be so nearly equal to that of females, being

as twenty to nineteen according to some computations, or as fourteen to thirteen according to others, that, if all men and all women were to be married, there could not be more than one wife to one husband, and one husband to one wife.

If it be objected, that, according to these computations, one woman in thirteen, or in nineteen, might have two husbands, the answer is, that men are, by their strength and spirit of enterprize, exposed to many dangers, in war, for example, and by sea, to which the other sex is not liable; and that, therefore, to keep the two sexes equal in respect of number, a small surplus of males must be necessary. This equality is a decisive intimation, that polygamy is not according to nature. If it were natural, some provision would have been made for it. But the economy of nature is plainly against it. And let me add, that this exact proportion of the sexes, continued through so many ages, and in all countries, (for we have no good reason to think, that it was ever otherwise in any country) is a striking proof of the care of a wise Providence; for the preservation of the human race; and is, moreover, a perpetual miracle, (if I may so speak) to declare, both that the union of the sexes is natural, and that Polygamy is not.

It is true, that, either from disinclination, or from unfavourable circumstances, many men never marry at all. But the same thing may be said with equal truth of many women. So that still, the balance of the sexes may be presumed to be even. And one man cannot marry more than one wife, without contradicting the views of Providence, and violating the rights of his fellow-creatures.

2. Polygamy is inconsistent with that affection, which married persons ought to bear to one another. To love one more than any other, is natural, and possible, and common: but to love two or more in preference to all others, and yet to love them equally, is so uncommon, that we may venture to call it unnatural, and



impossible. Such a passion, at least, would not be tolerated in poetry or romance; for every reader would say, that it was incredible in fiction, because it never happens in fact. In comedy sometimes, indeed, we find a profligate man making love to two women, or a lady at a loss which of two lovers to prefer: but this cannot be without dishonesty; for if the passion for the one be sincere, that for the other must be hypocritical. Even where polygamy prevails, it is generally found, that, whatever be the number of his wives, the husband has but one favourite. The consequence is, that she is hated by all the rest, and he on her account.

And this leads me to remark, 3. that Polygamy destroys the peace of families; and therefore stands in direct opposition to one of the chief ends of the matrimonial union. The wives hate one another as rivals, and bear a particular dislike to her who happens for the time to be most in favour with the husband. The children naturally take part with their respective mothers; and, instead of fraternal affection, are animated with mutual jealousy and envy. And thus a family becomes the seat of continual strife; and the husband must exercise a tyrannical authority over the whole, and make those obey him through fear, who are not attached to him by love. This observation is warranted by fact. In countries, where polygamy prevails, the wives are the slaves of the husband, and the enemies of one another; they are confined in a prison called a seraglio; and are attended by eunuchs, who serve at once for guards, and for spies, and who, it seems, form a necessary part of this detestable system of policy; the children are dissatisfied with the father, on account of his partialities, and with one another, because of their interfering interests: and conspiracies, poisoning, and assassination, are frequently the consequence. Surely, an economy cannot be rational, which for its very being depends upon practices that are a disgrace to human nature; and, a family thus divided against itself can never be happy. And in a nation made

up of such families, though there may be that dark and silent tranquillity, which proceeds from fear, there cannot be cheerfulness, industry, liberty, or kind affection; there cannot be that politeness, and sense of honour, which accompany the free and decent intercourse of the sexes; nor can there be that circulation of sentiments, whereby literature, free inquiry, and the knowledge and the love of truth, are promoted in the more enlightened parts of the world. This too is according to fact. The Turks, who allow polygamy, are the idle, the ignorant, and the devoted slaves of a tyrant, and of a most absurd superstition: within their own families they are tormented with apprehension and jealousy: honour is so little known among them, that they are said to have no word in their language to express the idea: and it is the principle of fear alone, that supports their government. When a despotick prince is no longer feared by his people, he is undone; and when he ceases to be afraid of them, his tyranny is intolerable.

4. After what has been said, it is unnecessary to add, in the fourth place, that Polygamy, being subversive of filial and parental affection, must be inconsistent with the right education of children, and so counteract another chief end of marriage. The father will probably be partial to the children of his favourites. Certain it is, that, if he have many children by several wives, he cannot love them all equally; nor can his love fail to be alienated by those dissatisfactions which he sees prevailing among them, and whereof he knows himself to be in a great measure the cause. Some of his children, therefore, he will look upon in the light of conspirators; and for his own security will be glad to form a party among the rest: which will widen the dissensions that divide his household, by giving them the sanction of his own example. How is it possible, that, in such a family, children should be well educated, or that virtue should be a matter of general concern! Even with us, when the husband and the wife happen to disagree in regard to the management

ment of their children, education is commonly neglected; the mother has one favourite, and the father another: and the children, following the example of their parents, adopt their humours and prejudices, and become licentious, disobedient, and regardless of instruction. Among the Turks, indeed, education cannot be considered as a matter of any great importance. In governments so tyrannical, the man who distinguishes himself by his genius, by his industry, or even by his virtue, becomes the object of jealousy to some person in power; so that the only way to live unmolested is to remain obscure and contemptible.

Enough has been said to prove, that Polygamy is unnatural, and destructive of virtue and happiness. But that it is in all possible cases criminal, I have no authority to affirm. Among Christians, indeed, it must always be so, because forbidden by our religion: and in all Christian countries it is punished, and in some capitally. But to the antient Jews and Patriarchs it was not forbidden; and seems in some cases to have been permitted as a punishment for their intemperance in desiring it. The greatest calamities that befel David would not have taken place, if he had been contented with one wife; and the sensuality of Solomon in this particular has fixed an indelible blemish on one of the brightest characters that ever appeared among men.

II. The second question to be considered is, Whether the matrimonial union ought to last through the whole of life.

Marriage is dissolved in two ways, by Death and by Divorce. Of Divorce there are two sorts; the one partial, or *a toro et mensa*, as the lawyers say, by which the parties are separated, but the marriage is not annulled: and when this happens, the wife, according to the law of England, is in most cases, though not in all, entitled to an *alimony*; that is, to a certain provision from the husband; the amount of which is determined by the ecclesiastical court, according to the circumstances of the case, and the quality of the parties.

The other sort of divorce, which is called *Divortium a vinculo matrimonii*, annuls the marriage altogether, and leaves the parties as free, as if they had never been united.

This final divorce the New Testament allows in the case of adultery only: but does not say, that, upon conviction of that crime, it ought to take place; and therefore, a Christian Legislature may warrantably establish, in regard to this matter, such limitations, as human wisdom may think most conducive to publick good. For if, on proof of adultery, the marriage were always to be dissolved, there is too much reason to fear, that, when a husband and wife were dissatisfied with each other, a desire of being disunited might tempt them to the commission of that wickedness. But so sacred is the nuptial tie accounted in most Christian nations, that, by the Canon Law, and by the Common Law of England, this crime is not a sufficient ground for a final divorce, but only for a separation *a toro et mensa*: it may only be pleaded by the parties, as a reason for their being disengaged *a vinculo matrimonii*; but the legislature may either admit that plea, or reject it \*. The only thing which, according to the common law of England, can nullify a marriage, is, its having been from the beginning null, because unlawful; as in the case of too near a degree of consanguinity. However, in England, upon a charge of adultery, marriage is sometimes annulled; not indeed by an action at common law, but by an act of parliament made for the purpose.

I mention these particulars, to show the opinion of mankind concerning the dissolution of the nuptial tie during the life of the parties. For the laws of enlightened nations, especially those laws that are of long standing, are to be considered as the result of reason and experience united: and therefore, in every inquiry that relates to

\* In Scotland, the sentence of the Commissaries, proceeding on the charge of adultery, if there be no appeal from it, annuls the marriage totally; so that there is no occasion for recourse to the Legislature.

the expediency of human conduct, deserve very great attention. It is plainly a doctrine of Christianity, as well as a principle of the British law, that the matrimonial union ought to be for life. And that the same conclusion may be drawn from philosophical considerations, that is, from the nature of man, and the end of the institution, it will not be difficult to prove.

The only scheme of temporary marriage, that has any shadow of plausibility, is that of those who contend, for argument's sake perhaps, that the man and woman should agree to be faithful to each other for a certain time; and then, if they found they were not happy, to separate, and be at liberty either to remain single, or to choose other partners. Now I have so good an opinion of human nature, as to believe, that, even if laws were made to this purpose, many men and women would be averse to a separation, from a regard to their children, and to one another. But, in framing laws, we are not so much to presume upon the possible virtues of individuals, as to guard against the probable evils that may be apprehended from the general depravity of the human heart. And it is easy to foresee, that the scheme in question would give licence to the profligate, expose the sober to temptation, destroy those sentiments of delicacy and esteem which the sexes ought to bear towards each other, poison the happiness of families, introduce disorder into the state, and prove ruinous to the education of children.

1. It cannot be denied, that rash marriages are more likely to prove unhappy, than such as are founded upon deliberate choice. And if this is true, whatever tends to make men and women considerate, in choosing partners for life, must tend eventually to the happiness of families. But if even the alarming thought, that the matrimonial union cannot be dissolved but by death, does not always prevent a rash choice; what, may we think, would be the consequence, if it were in the power of the parties to put an end

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to their union, and engage in a new one, whenever they pleased? The consequence would be, such precipitancy and caprice in forming this relation, as might preclude all hopes of conjugal felicity.

2. It will also be allowed, that persons, who are united by a sincere friendship, have a better chance to be happy, than those who come together without friendship. Now it is the nature of true friendship, to desire a *permanent* union: nay, good men hope to enjoy the society of their friends in another world for ever. Men may for a limited time enter into partnership in trade; and servants and masters may mutually become bound to each other for a certain number of months or years: gain, or convenience, are the foundation of such contracts; and, if friendship be super-added, that will continue when the contract is dissolved. But who ever thought of forming temporary friendship! Should we choose that person for our friend, who would tell us, that he was willing to be so for a year or two; but that thenceforth he and we were to be mutually indifferent to each other? Would it be possible for us to think his affection sincere, or indeed that he had for us any affection at all?

Besides, when a man tells a woman, that he wishes to employ his life in making her happy, (and this must be a sentiment in every marriage that is founded on esteem) is it not more likely, that she will love him as a husband, and as a friend, than if he were to say, or to be supposed to say, that he would be glad to live with her two or three years, or perhaps for a longer time, if he found her agreeable, and did not change his mind? To a proposal of this sort, every woman who had any pretensions to delicacy, to sense, or to virtue, would surely return a very contemptuous answer. Were matters to come to this pass, all esteem and confidence between man and woman would be at an end: and both to the one sex, and to the other, the love of gain, or of convenience, or a more shameful principle, would be, or (which is the same

same thing in this case) would seem to be, the sole motive to such temporary attachment. It follows, that they would be mutually suspicious, and mutually disgusted; and each inclined to pursue a private and separate interest, at the other's expence. Whereas, when a man and a woman are united for life, from a principle of mutual esteem, (without which no marriage can be lawful) it is hardly possible, that they should have separate interests; or if, in consequence of some previous bargain on the subject of money, either party could become rich at the expence of the other, a regard to their children would, if they were not lost to all natural affection, inspire them with more generous sentiments.

3. It deserves to be considered, whether the scheme proposed would not debase those ideas of Delicacy, wherewith the intercourse of the sexes ought always to be accompanied. By Delicacy, I here mean, a peculiar warmth and purity of affection, which can only be gratified by a consciousness of possessing, without a rival, the entire esteem of the person beloved. The natural effect of it is, a desire to please, not merely by a generous and respectful behaviour, but also by entertaining no thoughts or wishes, but such as the object of the passion would approve. It is this, that distinguishes the union of cultivated minds from the brutal inclinations of a sensualist or savage: and, as it promotes modesty of speech and of manners, and lays a restraint on every irregular desire, it must be of importance both to publick order, and to private happiness. But how is it possible, that this delicacy should form any part of the attachment of those, who have no other view than to be together for a stipulated time; and who perhaps, during their term of cohabitation, had their thoughts fixed on other partners, and were listening to proposals, or contriving plans, for a new connection! Persons, thus united, would in these respects be *suspicious* at least of one another; which would destroy all delicacy of affection, and could hardly fail to end in mutual abhorrence.

4. This scheme would be fatal to the education of children. By it, they are, or they may be, even in their infancy, abandoned to the care of one of the parents, who, having lost all esteem for the other, and being now, probably, engrossed by a new attachment, cannot be supposed to retain any warmth of parental affection towards them. The other parent may also be engaged in a new alliance; and have little inclination to look back, except with disgust, upon the former, or any person connected with it. Thus the children are neglected by one parent, or perhaps by both. Or a second, or a third succession of brothers and sisters may be obtruded upon them; for whom they, detached from the present family, and deriving their origin from a family that no longer exists, cannot entertain any particular kindness. And thus, the ties of blood would be overlooked or forgotten; kindred would become too complex a thing to be comprehended by ordinary understandings; the parental, filial, and fraternal charities would of course be extinguished, the human heart hardened, and society transformed into a scene of confusion. Nor does it seem possible for human policy to contrive a cure for these evils, without removing their cause, by the establishment of regular matrimony.

If it were worth while to enlarge on a topick, which is too plain to require further illustration, we might consider, how the particular interests of men and of women, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the strong and the sickly, would be affected by the scheme of temporary marriages. And I think it might be made appear, that to the young, the healthy, and the rich, it would afford the means of unbounded profligacy; while to the poor, the old, and the infirm, it must prove injurious and comfortless. In a word, marriage must be for life. If, at the will of the parties, it might be limited to a shorter term, it would give rise to as many evils as polygamy itself; and overturn all delicacy, decency, morality, good order, and kind affection. Grant, that a regular



institution of matrimony may sometimes be attended with inconvenience, when persons must remain united for life, who yet, while united, cannot be happy. What then? Must the best rights of society be sacrificed to the humour of a few individuals, who perhaps, if they had it in their power to break loose from the present engagement, and to form another, would still be as unhappy as before? The evils complained of are to be remedied, not by unhinging society, but by reforming the education, and regulating the passions, of young people of both sexes. When this is done, let mutual affection, deliberately formed, be the motive to the matrimonial union; let the persons united be careful, from a sense of their own infirmities, to cultivate mutual forbearance; let them repress intemperate thoughts, and apply diligently to the duties of their station: and there will be no reason to complain, that the sexes are made unhappy by being united for life.

I know not, whether temporary marriages, depending, for their duration, upon the will of the parties, ever took place in regular society: which may be considered as a proof, that they are not consistent with good order, or with the ends of the matrimonial union. It is true, that in some countries divorces have been more frequent, and permitted for slighter causes, than in others. But, for the most part, they have been subject to the cognizance of law, and not left to the determination of the parties. Among the Jews, indeed, before the promulgation of the gospel, the husband might dismiss his wife, on giving her, what Scripture calls, a bill of divorcement. But we are told, from the highest authority, that in the earlier ages of the world, when mankind were less corrupt, it was not so; and that Moses allowed it, not because it was good, but in order to prevent greater evils, which he had reason to apprehend, from the known perverseness of the Jewish nation.—Romulus, too, permitted husbands on some occasions to put away their wives; for a Roman father had a sort of judicial authority over his

household: but, if it be true, that there was no instance of a divorce at Rome, till the five hundred and twenty-fifth year of the city, may we not infer, that this law of Romulus was rashly made, and not conformable to the sentiments of the people; and that it remained in force, merely because it was overlooked; as many old laws do in all nations? Marriages of certain sorts were by the laws of Romulus declared perpetual: which Dionysius the historian greatly approves of; because he thinks, that it must have been, both to the husband and to the wife, a motive to discreet behaviour, and mutual forbearance. “ This law, says he, engaged the wives, who  
 “ had no other resource, to yield a ready compliance to the temper  
 “ of their husbands; and it obliged the husbands, on the other  
 “ hand, to treat their wives as a necessary possession, which they  
 “ could not on any account relinquish.” And it cannot be doubted, that, when married persons know that their union is to be for life, they will be more inclined to adapt themselves to the tempers of one another, and to reform what is amiss in their own disposition, than if they had it in their power to be divorced as soon as they became mutually dissatisfied. So that the perpetuity of this contract has a manifest tendency to promote the happiness of the parties, as well as to purify their manners.

III. Whether the rearing and educating of children should be left to the parents, or provided for by the publick, is the third question which I proposed to examine.

And it is readily allowed, that there must be an egregious fault in the policy of a nation, where the law does not provide a remedy, and a punishment, for the negligence of parents in this particular. And too many parents there are, who seem very inattentive to the right education of their children: nay, it is to be feared, that not a few are chargeable, not with inattention only, but even with the guilt of corrupting the morals and the principles of their children, by indulgence and bad example. Do we not meet with young

creatures, who seem to have learned to swear, and to lie, as soon as to speak? And can we suppose, that such a thing would have happened under the tuition of a good parent? I grant, that some natures may be more untractable than others: but there are certain vices, and swearing is one of them, to which there is no temptation in any of our natural appetites, which therefore children can never acquire of themselves, and which the admonitions of an attentive parent could hardly fail to prevent, or to cure.

But, if the state were to abolish the ties of parental duty, by training up the young ones from their birth in seminaries, under the eye of teachers appointed by publick authority, it is to be feared, that the teachers might be still more negligent, because less affectionate, than parents; and that the influence of bad example would not be less fatal in those large societies, than in families. Publick Institutions there are among us, for training up children at a distance from their parents: but domestick discipline is found to be as friendly to virtue, and is certainly more agreeable to nature. Boarding-schools for young women have been accounted so dangerous to virtue, that intelligent parents, who send their infant daughters to those seminaries, are generally careful to take them home before they cease to be children.

While, therefore, I regret the inattention of many parents to one of the most indispensable of all human duties, I cannot adopt the sentiments of those, who maintain, that parents in general are not to be intrusted with the care of their young ones\*.—For if children  
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\* Of the proper methods of education, the generality of the common people are more ignorant, than of any other part of duty. They imitate one another in this respect; and a person, who has had no opportunities of observing their conduct, would hardly believe what absurd practices prevail among them. The books that have been written on education, many of which are very useful, come not into their hands, and are not level to their capacity. Indeed they are rather unwilling to receive advice on this head. “I breed my children (say they) as I was bred myself;” to which some complaisant

and their parents were forced to live separate, the attachments of kindred would be greatly weakened, if not entirely lost. Now this must be unsuitable to the views of Providence; who would not have made the ties of natural affection so strong in every animal, and especially in man, if it had been for the advantage of animal life, or of human society, that they should be dissolved or disregarded. That nature intended the mother to be the nurse of her own infant, and that the worst consequences are to be apprehended when we wilfully contradict this intention of nature, is too plain to require any proof. And when the mother has, with the father's aid, discharged that part of her duty, in which, in ordinary cases, every mother finds the greatest delight; and when thus the attachment of both parents to their child is heightened by long acquaintance, and by those thrillings of ineffable satisfaction, wherewith

complaisant neighbour subjoins, "And if they do as you have done, they will act their part very well." While matters go on thus, improvements are not to be looked for; in education, or in any thing else.

How is the evil to be remedied? By separating the children from their parents; and committing the former to the care of strangers? No: such a remedy would be worse than the evil. How then? By instructing parents in their duty? Yes; that would be the easier, the more natural, and the more effectual way.

I have therefore often wished, that the teachers of religion would, in their publick discourses and private admonitions, not only recommend the right education of children in general terms, which in fact they do, but also lay down, and enforce, the method of it, with some degree of minuteness; exposing at the same time the improprieties of the prevailing practice. The subject, it may be said, is too copious to be discussed in a sermon, and too familiar to be delivered from the pulpit. I answer, that, if expressed in proper language, it would derive dignity from its importance; and that its relation to common life would render it intelligible and interesting. And surely, education is not a more copious theme, than many of those are, on which it is the preacher's duty to expatiate. It would not be necessary for him to enter into it with the nicety of a Locke, or a Rousseau. If he could only reform a few of the grosser improprieties of domestick discipline, he would be a blessing to his people, and an honour to his profession. Nor would parents only be improved by discourses of this nature. He who instructs the teacher may convey useful hints to those who are to be taught. By hearing a parent's duty explained a child could hardly fail to learn his own.

every

every exercise of parental love is accompanied:—when, I say, the parental affections are thus wound up to the highest pitch, *where* is the child likely to meet with so much tenderness, and so zealous a concern for his temporal and eternal welfare, as in the house of those who gave him birth?

An interchange of the parental and filial duties is, moreover, friendly to the happiness, and to the virtue of all concerned. It gives a peculiar sensibility to the heart of man; infusing a spirit of generosity and a sense of honour, which have a most benign influence on publick good, as well as on private manners. When we read, that Epaminondas, after the battle of Leuctra, declared, that one chief cause of his joy was the consideration of the pleasure which his victory would give his father and mother; is it possible for us to think, that this man, the greatest perhaps and the best that Greece ever saw\*, would have been so generous, or so amiable, if he had not known who his parents were? In fact, there are not many virtues that reflect greater honour upon our nature, than the parental and the filial. When any uncommon examples of them occur in history, or in poetry, they make their way to the heart at once, and the reader's melting eye bears testimony to their loveliness.

Amidst the triumphs of heroism, Hector never appears so great, as in a domestick scene, when he invokes the blessing of heaven upon his child: nor does Priam, on any other occasion, engage our esteem so effectually, or our pity, as when, at the hazard of his life, he goes into the enemies camp, and into the presence of his fiercest enemy, to beg the dead body of his Son. Achilles's love to his parents forms a distinguishing part of his character; and that single circumstance throws an amiable softness into the most terrific human personage that ever was described in poetry. The interview between Ulysses and his Father, after an absence of twenty years,

\* Epaminondas princeps, ut opinor, Græciæ. Cicero. Tuscul.

it is impossible to read without such emotion, as will convince every reader of sensibility, that Homer judged well, in making parental and filial virtue the subject of his song, when he meant to show his power over the tender passions.

Virgil was too wise, not to imitate his master in this particular. He expatiates on the same virtue with peculiar complacency; and loves to set it off in the most charming colours. His hero is an illustrious example. When Anchises refuses to leave Troy, and signifies his resolution to perish in its flames, Eneas, that he may not survive his father, or witness the massacre of his household, is on the point of rushing to certain death; and nothing less than a miracle prevents him. He then bears on his shoulders the infirm old man to a place of safety, and ever after behaves towards him as becomes a son, and a subject\*; and speaks of his death in terms of the utmost tenderness and veneration. As a father he is equally affectionate: and his son is not deficient in filial duty.—Turnus, when vanquished, condescends to ask his life, for the sake of his aged parent, who he knew would be inconsolable for his loss. The young, the gentle, the beautiful Lausus dies in defence of his father; and the father provokes his own destruction, because he cannot live without his son, and wishes to be laid with him in the same grave. The lamentations of Evander over his Pallas transcend all praise of criticism. And nothing, even in this poem, the most pathetick of all human compositions, is more moving, than what is related of the gallant youth Euryalus; when, on undertaking that night-adventure which proved fatal to him, he recommends his helpless parent to the Trojan prince. “She knows not,” says he, “of this enterprise; and I go without bidding her farewell: for “I call the Gods to witness, that I cannot support the sight of a

\* On the death of Priam and his Sons, Anchises became king of the Trojans, and accordingly is represented by Virgil as Commander in chief in Eneas's expedition. After his death, Eneas is called king by his followers. See *Æneid*. I. 548, 557.

“weeping

“weeping mother.”—Let a man read Virgil with attention, and with taste; and then be a cruel parent, or an undutiful child, if he can. And let him ask his own heart this question, Whether human nature would not be deprived of many of its best affections, and human society of its best comforts, if the ideas of those projectors were to be realised, who propose to improve the political art, by annihilating the attachments of consanguinity.

Mankind have in all ages paid respect to high birth, and entertained a partiality towards those who are descended of virtuous ancestors. And of several good reasons, that have been given for it, this is one; that we may have more confidence in the honour of such persons, than in those who have no illustrious, or honest, kindred, to disgrace by their unworthiness, or to adorn by their virtue. Is not this a proof, that the ties of kindred are understood to be friendly to our nature; and, that the policy, which tends to loosen them, by keeping parents and children separate, or mutually unknown to each other, must be detrimental to publick good, as well as to private happiness? Bacon has an excellent remark on this subject. “Unmarried men, says he, are best friends, best masters, best servants: but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives are of that condition.—For soldiers,” (continues he, a little after) “I find that the generals in their hortatives commonly put men in mind of their wives and children: and I think the despising of marriage among the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly, wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity: and single men, though they be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard-hearted, because their tenderness is not so oft called upon.”\*

My principal view in this argument is, to overturn one of Plato's theories. That philosopher is of opinion, that parents

\* Essay viii.

ought not to be entrusted with their children, because they are apt to ruin them by immoderate fondness. His plan, therefore, is, that infants, as soon as born, should be conveyed to places set apart for them, and taken care of by nurses and teachers appointed by the publick: that parents may never know their own offspring; and that from their earliest years the rising generation may be taught to consider themselves as the children of the commonwealth. He thinks too, that the father and mother should not live in domestick union; nor ever meet, but on certain solemn festivals; and that even this indulgence should be denied to all, who are not in the prime of life, and of a healthy constitution. In a word, his plan tends to abolish families, to efface every idea of kindred, and to render the intercourse of the sexes in the rational world similar to that of brutes: which would make men worse than savages; destroy all the delicacies of modesty, and conjugal friendship; and deprive society of those most important means of improvement, which men and women derive from the company and conversation of each other. It would also divest us of those habits of mutual kindness that take their rise in a family, and are, as we have seen, so effectual in refining and adorning our nature\*; and it would extinguish many of the noblest incentives to activity and patriotism. If we had been sent into the world for no other purpose, but to act a part, like puppets or players, in the farce of democratical government; and had no private interest to contend for, while here, and no

\* In that magnificent institution of the Empress of Russia, for educating her young nobility, the children are visited from time to time by their parents, and may correspond with them by letter; and none under the age of five years are sent to the academies. Thus that great and wise princess secures the continuance of parental and filial love, at the same time that she promotes, by the most effectual means, the civilization of her empire. For in this way, her nobles must soon equal those of the politest nations in elegance of manners; and the improvement of the common people will follow as a necessary consequence. Her nobility, indeed, are not in this respect her only care. To the interests of education in the middle ranks of life she is not less attentive.



need to prepare our minds, by habits of piety and benevolence, for happiness hereafter: in a word, if we were creatures quite different from what we are, this plan might be allowed to have some meaning. But, taking man as he is, and paying a due regard to his inherent rights, and final destination, we cannot hesitate to pronounce it unnatural and absurd, and alike unfriendly to happiness and to virtue.

And what, you will ask, are the advantages supposed by the fanciful philosopher to result from it? He thinks, it would free the commonwealth from the evils of avarice, the chief motive to which he imagines to be one's attachment to a family. But in this he is widely mistaken. Attachment to a family gives rise to industry, and prudent economy, which ought always to be encouraged, because productive of private happiness, as well as of publick good; but has nothing to do with avarice; which is known to be subversive of benevolence, and to prevail more in hearts that are hardened against the claims of consanguinity, and the calls of nature, than among those who love their children and kindred. He thinks, that in this way the state would be supplied with healthy citizens: and in this too he is mistaken. For the constitution of the child may be bad, when that of the parent is good; and weakly parents have often strong children. Nor is bodily strength the only thing desirable in a good citizen; wisdom and virtue, which are often united with an infirm body, are much more important: Demosthenes, Cicero, and in the latter part of his life Julius Cesar, were valetudinarians; and one of the greatest men that Sparta ever produced, I mean Agefilaus, was lame of a leg. And it is found by experience, that, without being subjected to the restraints proposed by this unnatural plan of policy, most men enjoy as much health, as is requisite to all the ordinary business of life.—Plato imagines further, that by his scheme rebellion and sedition would be prevented; which, he seems to think, do commonly take their rise

among persons united by the ties of blood. But neither is this true. In civil commotions, we often see parents and children attach themselves to opposite parties; and one of the most shocking calamities attending civil war is, that it promotes contention among kindred, and sets brother against brother, and the father against the son.

As to that indiscreet fondness wherewith some parents treat their children; it is an evil no doubt, and tends to produce evil; but it hurts a few individuals only, and its bad consequences are often successfully counteracted by a little knowledge of the world:—whereas the proposed remedy would affect the whole commonwealth with evils incomparably greater, and withal incurable. Besides, teachers, as well as parents, have been partial to favourites; but nobody ever thought of abolishing education, to get rid of this inconvenience. It would be, like cutting off the legs, in order to keep the gout out of the great toe; or like knocking out all the teeth, for the purpose of preventing the tooth-ach. The best security against the evils of parental fondness, is parental love; and, where parents have good sense, that will always be security sufficient.

I L L U S T R A T I O N S  
O N  
S U B L I M I T Y.

**L**ONGINUS, the Secretary of Zenobia queen of Palmyra, who was conquered by the emperour Aurelian about the middle of the third century, composed many books of philosophy and criticism, and among others a discourse on Sublimity, which is the only part of his writings that has been preserved to our time. He is an author, not more remarkable for accuracy of judgment, than for the energy of his style, and a peculiar boldness and elevation of thought. And men of learning have vied with each other, in celebrating and expounding that work; which is indeed one of the best specimens that remain of antient criticism, and well deserves the attention of every scholar.

But he has used the word \* *Hypsos* in a more general sense, than is commonly annexed to the term *Sublimity*; not always distinguishing what is sublime from what is elegant or beautiful. The distinction, however, ought to be made. Both indeed give delight; but the gratification we derive from the one is different from that which accompanies the other. It is pleasing to behold a fine face, or an apartment elegantly furnished and of exact proportion; it is also pleasing to contemplate a craggy mountain, a vast cathedral, or a magnificent palace: but surely, the one sort of pleasure differs as much from the other, as complacency differs from admiration, or the soft melody of a flute from the overpowering tones of a full organ.

\* ὑψος.

Grammarians are not agreed about the etymology of the word *Sublime*. The most probable opinion is, that it may be derived from *supra* and *limus*; and so denotes literally the circumstance of being raised *above* the *slime*, the *mud*, or the *mould*, of this world. Be that as it may, it uniformly signifies in the Latin, whence we have taken it, *elevation*, or *loftiness*. And, because whatever is much elevated, as a high building, or a high mountain, infuses into the beholder a sort of pleasing astonishment; hence those things in art or nature; which have the same effect on the mind, are, with a view to that effect, called by the same name. Great depth, being the correlative of great height, and being indeed implied in it, (for whatever is high from below is deep from above) and because it astonishes and pleases the imagination, is also to be considered as sublime. For, if we be ourselves secure, every one must have observed, that it is agreeable to look down, from a mountain, upon the plain, or from the top of a high building, upon the various objects below. Cotton says, with the energy and enthusiasm of Dryden:

O my beloved rocks, that rise  
 To awe the earth, and brave the skies!  
 From some aspiring mountain's crown,  
 How dearly do I love,  
 Giddy with pleasure, to look down:  
 And from the vales to view the noble heights above!\*

“It is pleasant,” says Lucretius, “to behold from the land the labours of the mariner in a tempestuous ocean; — but nothing is more delightful, than from the heights of science to look down on those who wander in the mazes of error: not (says he) because we are gratified with another's distress; but because there is a pleasure in seeing evils from which we ourselves are

\* See Walton's Angler. Part ii.

“ free.” The fact is partly so; but the poet entirely mistakes the cause. It is pleasant to behold the sea in a storm, on account of its astonishing greatness and impetuosity; and it is pleasant to look down from an elevated situation, because here too there is greatness and delightful astonishment. But to see others in danger, or unhappy in their ignorance, must always give pain to a considerate mind, however conscious it may be of its own security, and wisdom. Such a sentiment we need not wonder to find in an Epicurean poet; as all the views of his master terminated in self. But it is somewhat strange, that Creech, in a note upon the passage, should vindicate his author in these terms: *Id asserit poeta, quod omnes sentiunt; qui dolore aut morbo laborantem videt, protinus, O me sælicem:* “ The poet asserts nothing, but what is warranted by universal experience; when we see a man diseased, or in pain, we immediately exclaim (or think) How happy are we!” Every generous mind *feels* the falsehood of this doctrine. It was, however, a favourite topick of Swift; as appears from those verses on his own death, in which he comments upon a silly and ambiguous maxim of Rochefoucault \*. According to this theory, the most desirable

\* The maxim is, *Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons toujours quelque chose, qui ne nous déplaît pas:* In the adversity of our best friends we find always something that does not displease us. This may mean, either, that while our best friends are in adversity we always meet with some gratification; or, that the adversity of our best friends is always to us the source of some gratification. The former remark is true: for, while our friend is, or even while ourselves are, in trouble, we may no doubt have the comfort, of eating when we are hungry, drinking when thirsty, resting when weary; to say nothing of the higher enjoyments of science, and of virtue. But this is a childish observation; and has no particular reference to Rochefoucault's system. I therefore suppose the meaning to be, that the calamities which overtake our best friends always give us some degree of pleasure: and this, though no childish observation, every man, who is not corrupted by extreme selfishness, knows to be utterly false. It is natural to wish for that which we know to bring pleasure along with it: but what sort of person would he be, who for his own gratification could wish his best friends to be in adversity!

desirable of all human conditions would be that of the superintendent of an hospital, the keeper of Bedlam, or the commander of galley-slaves: who would every moment be rejoicing in the thought, that he was free from the miseries which he beheld around him.

To this notable aphorism Swift makes a little addition, by his paraphrase. "In all *distresses* of our friends, We *first* consult our private ends," &c. What can this mean? A child who is playing near me gets a dangerous fall: a friend who is riding with me is thrown from his horse, and has his leg broken. In this case, what do I do? I *first* of all, says Swift, (what! before I either aid, or pity him? Yes; I *first*) consult some private end of my own; that is (if it be any thing) I consider, how I may make this accident turn to my own advantage. What might pass in the mind of Swift on an occasion like this, I know not: but in me, and in most other beings of human form, I am certain there would be no such idea. Without thinking of ourselves at all, we should instantly give every assistance in our power: or, if we did not, we should deserve to be driven out of society. — But perhaps, by the word *first* the author here means *chiefly*: "When our friend is in distress, our chief desire is, not that he may be relieved, but that we may from his suffering reap some benefit." This will not mend the matter. For, at this rate, love is hatred; and *friend* and *enemy* are synonymous terms. — The truth may be, that Swift, knowing the couplet would not be compleat without a second line, and a rhyme to *friends*, took the liberty, on this one occasion, — *to make The one verse for the other's sake; For one for sense, and one for rhyme, He thought sufficient at this time.* — But he brings examples to confirm his doctrine. He does. In order to *prove*, from *reason* and *experience*, that in all *distresses* of our friends we first consult our private ends, he argues, that, when our friend is NOT IN DISTRESS, but in an advantageous situation, we wish to be in as good a place as he, or perhaps in a better; that, when Ned is in the gout, we patiently hear him groan, and are glad that we are not in it; that one poet wishes all his rival-poets in hell, rather than that they should write better than he: and he urges other considerations, humourously expressed indeed, but not more to the purpose. In a word, his arguments amount to this: "Emulation is natural; Some men, particularly poets and wits, are prone to envy; And we think it a good thing to be in health. *Argal*, There is no such thing in this world as sincere friendship, or disinterested compassion." This may be wit; but it is not sense.

Let not this note be deemed a digression. Of the sublimities of art and nature the human soul would be a very incompetent judge, if it were so mean, so contemptible, and so hateful a thing, as some writers would have us believe. Our taste for the sublime is considered by two great authors (who will be quoted in the sequel, as a proof of the dignity of our nature.

What we admire, or consider as great, we are apt to speak of in such terms, as if we conceived it to be high in place: and what we look upon as less important we express in words that properly denote low situation. We go *up* to London; and thence *down* into the country. The Jews spoke in the same manner of their metropolis, which was to them the object of religious veneration. "Jerusalem, says the Psalmist, is a city, to which the tribes go up:" and the parable of the good Samaritan begins thus, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho." Conformably to the same idiom, heaven is supposed to be above, and hell to be beneath; and we say, that generous minds endeavour to reach the *summit* of excellence, and think it *beneath* them to do, or design, any thing that is base. The terms *base*, *groveling*, *low*, &c. and those of opposite import, *elevated*, *aspiring*, *lofty*, as applied in a figurative sense to the energies of mind, do all take their rise from the same modes of thinking. The Latins expressed admiration by a verb which properly signifies *to look up* (*susplicere*); and contempt by another (*despicere*) whose original meaning is *to look down*. A high seat is erected for a king, or a chief magistrate, and a lofty pedestal for the statue of a hero; partly, no doubt, that they may be seen at the greater distance, and partly also, out of respect to their dignity.

But mere local elevation is not the only source of sublimity. Things that surpass in magnitude; as a spacious building, a great city, a large river, a vast mountain, a wide prospect, the ocean, the expanse of heaven, fill the mind of the beholder with the same agreeable astonishment. And observe, that it is rather the relative magnitude of things, as compared with others of the same kind, that raises this emotion, than their absolute quantity of matter. That may be a sublime edifice, which in real magnitude falls far short of a small hill that is not sublime: and a river two furlongs in breadth

is a majestick appearance, though in extent of water it is as nothing when compared with the ocean.

Great number, too, when it gives rise to admiration, may be referred to the same class of things. Hence an army, or navy, a long succession of years, eternity, and the like, are sublime, because they at once please and astonish. In contemplating such ideas or objects, we are conscious of something like an expansion of our faculties, as if we were exerting our whole capacity to comprehend the vastness of that which commands our attention \*. This energy of the mind is pleasing, as all mental energies are when unaccompanied with pain: and the pleasure is heightened by our admiration of the object itself; for admiration is always agreeable.

In many cases, great number is connected with other grand ideas, which add to its own grandeur. A fleet, or army, makes us think of power, and courage, and danger, and presents a variety of brilliant images. A long succession of years brings to view the vicissitude of human things, and the uncertainty of life, which sooner or later must yield to death, the irresistible destroyer. And eternity reminds us of that awful consideration, our own immortality; and is connected with an idea still more sublime, and indeed the most sublime of all, namely, with the idea of HIM, who fills immensity with his presence; creates, preserves, and governs all things; and is from everlasting to everlasting.

In general, whatever awakens in us this pleasurable astonishment is accounted sublime, whether it be connected with quantity and number, or not. The harmony of a loud and full organ conveys, no doubt, an idea of expansion and of power; but, independently on this, it overpowers with so sweet a violence, as charms and astonishes at the same time: and we are generally conscious of an elevation of mind when we hear it, even though the ear be not sensible of

\* Spectator, Numb. 412. Gerard on Taste.



any melody. Thunder and tempest are still more elevating, when one hears them without fear; because the sound is still more stupendous; and because they fill the imagination with the magnificent idea of the expanse of heaven and earth, through which they direct their terrible career, and of that Almighty Being, whose will controuls all nature. The roar of cannon, in like manner, when considered as harmless, gives a dreadful delight; partly by the overwhelming sensation wherewith it affects the ear, and partly by the ideas of power and danger, triumph and fortitude, which it conveys to the fancy.

Those passions of the soul yield a pleasing astonishment, which discover a high degree of moral excellence, or are in any way connected with great number, or great quantity. Benevolence and piety are sublime affections; for the object of the one is the Deity himself, the greatest, and the best; and that of the other is the whole human race, or the whole system of percipient beings. Fortitude and generosity are sublime emotions: because they discover a degree of virtue, which is not every where to be met with; and exert themselves in actions, that are at once difficult, and beneficial to mankind\*.—Great intellectual abilities, as the genius of Homer, or of Newton, we cannot contemplate without wonder and delight, and must therefore refer to that class of things whereof I now speak.—Nay great bodily strength is a sublime object; for we are agreeably astonished, when we see it exerted, or hear of its effects.—There is even a sublime beauty, which both astonishes and charms: but this will be found in those persons only, or chiefly, who unite fine features with a majestick form; such as we may suppose an antient statuary would have represented Juno, or Minerva, Achilles, or Apollo.

\* This idea of Fortitude is admitted by the Stoicks, and all the best Moralists. That courage (says Tully) which aims only at self-interest, and is not regulated by equity and benevolence, is to be called *audacity* rather than *fortitude*.

When great qualities prevail in any person, they form what is called a sublime character \*. Every good man is a personage of this order: but a character may be sublime, which is not completely good, nay, which is upon the whole very bad. For the test of sublimity is not moral approbation, but that pleasurable astonishment wherewith certain things strike the beholder. Sarpedon, in the Iliad, is a sublime character, and at the same time a good one: to the valour of the hero he joins the benignity of a gracious prince, and the moderation of a wise man. Achilles, though in many respects not virtuous, is yet a most sublime character. We hate his cruelty, passionate temper, and love of vengeance: but we admire him for his valour, strength, swiftness, generosity, beauty, and intellectual accomplishments, for the warmth of his friendship, and for his filial tenderness †. In a word, notwithstanding his violent nature, there is in his general conduct a mixture of goodness and of greatness, with which we are both pleased and astonished. Julius Cesar was never considered as a man of strict virtue. But, in reading his *Memoirs*, it is impossible not to be struck with the sublimity of his character: that strength of mind, which nothing can bear down; that self-command, which is never discomposed; that intrepidity in danger; that address in negotiation; that coolness and recollection in the midst of perplexity; and that unwearied activity, which crowds together in every one of his campaigns as many great actions as would make a hero. Nay even in Satan, as Milton has represented him in *Paradise Lost*, though there are no qualities that can be called good in a moral view; nay, though every purpose of that wicked spirit is bent to evil, and to that only; yet there is the grandeur of a ruined archangel: there is force able to contend with the most boisterous elements; and there is boldness, which no power, but what is Almighty, can intimidate. These qualities are astonishing: and, though we always detest his malig-

\* Gerard on Taste.

† Essay on Poetry and Music. Part i. chap. 4.

nity, we are often compelled to admire that very greatness by which we are confounded and terrified.

And be not surpris'd, that we sometimes admire what we cannot approve. These two emotions may, and frequently do, coincide: Sarpedon and Hector, Epaminondas and Aristides, David and Jonathan, we both approve and admire. But they do not necessarily coincide: for goodness calls forth the one, and greatness the other; and that which is great is not always good, and that may be good which is not great. Troy in flames, Palmyra in ruins, the ocean in a storm, and Etna in thunder and conflagration, are magnificent appearances, but do not immediately impress our minds with the idea of good: and a clear fountain is not a grand object, though in many parts of the world it would be valued above all treasures. So in the qualities of the mind and body: we admire the strong, the brave, the eloquent, the beautiful, the ingenious, the learned; but the virtuous only we approve. There have been authors indeed, one at least there has been, who, by confounding admiration with approbation, laboured to confound intellectual accomplishments with moral virtues; but it is shameful inaccuracy, and vile sophistry: one might as well endeavour to confound crimes with misfortunes, and strength of body with purity of mind; and say, that to be a knave and to lose a leg are equally worthy of punishment, and that one man deserves as much praise for being born with a healthy constitution, as another does for leading a good life.

But if sublime ideas are known by their power of inspiring agreeable astonishment, and if Satan in *Paradise Lost* is a sublime idea, does it not follow, that we must be both astonished at his character, and pleased with it? And is it possible to take pleasure in a being, who is the author of evil, and the adversary of God and man?

I answer; that, though we know there is an evil spirit of this name, we know also, that Milton's Satan is partly imaginary; and we believe, that those qualities are so in particular, which we admire

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in him as great : for we have no reason to think, that he has really that boldness, irresistible strength, or dignity of form, which the poet ascribes to him. So far, therefore, as we admire him for sublimity of character, we consider him, not as the great enemy of our souls, but as a fictitious being, and a mere poetical hero. Now the human imagination can easily combine ideas in an assemblage, which are not combined in nature ; and make the same person the object of admiration in one respect, who in another is detestable : and such inventions are in poetry the more probable, because such persons are to be met with in real life. Achilles and Alexander, for example, we admire for their magnanimity, but abhor for their cruelty. And the poet, whose aim is to please, finds it necessary to give some good qualities to his bad characters ; for, if he did not, the reader would not be interested in their fortune, nor, consequently, pleased with the story of it. \*

In the *picture* of a burning city, we may admire the splendour of the colours, the undulation of the flames, the arrangements of light and shade, and the other proofs of the painter's skill ; and nothing gives a more exquisite delight of the melancholy kind, than Virgil's account of the burning of Troy. But this does not imply, that we should, like Nero, take any pleasure in such an event, if it were real and present. Indeed, few appearances are more beautiful, or more sublime, than a mass of flame, rolling in the wind, and blazing to heaven : whence illuminations, bonfires, and fireworks make part of a modern triumph. Yet destruction by fire is of all earthly things the most terrible.

An object more astonishing, both to the eye, and to the ear, there is hardly in nature, than (what is sometimes to be seen in the West Indies) a plantation of sugar-canes on fire, flaming to a vast height, sweeping the whole country, and every moment sending forth a thousand explosions, like those of artillery. A good de-

\* See Essay on Poetry and Music, Part i. chap. 3.

scription of such a scene we should admire as sublime; for a description can neither burn nor destroy. But the planter, who sees it desolating his fields, and ruining all his hopes, can feel no other emotions than horror and sorrow.—In a word, the Sublime, in order to give pleasing astonishment, must be either imaginary, or not immediately pernicious.

There is a kind of horror, which may be infused into the mind both by natural appearances, and by verbal description; and which, though it make the blood seem to run cold, and produce a momentary fear, is not unpleasing, but may be even agreeable: and therefore, the objects that produce it are justly denominated sublime. Of natural appearances that affect the mind in this manner, are vast caverns, deep and dark woods, overhanging precipices, the agitation of the sea in a storm: and some of the sounds above-mentioned have the same effect, as those of cannon and thunder. Verbal descriptions infusing sublime horror are such as convey lively ideas, of the objects of superstition, as ghosts and enchantments; or of the thoughts that haunt the imaginations of the guilty; or of those external things, which are pleasingly terrible, as storms, conflagrations, and the like.

It may seem strange, that horror of any kind should give pleasure. But the fact is certain. Why do people run to see battles, executions, and shipwrecks? Is it, as an Epicurean would say, to compare themselves with others, and exult in their own security while they see the distress of those who suffer? No, surely: good minds are swayed by different motives. Is it, that they may be at hand, to give every assistance in their power to their unhappy brethren? This would draw the benevolent, and even the tender-hearted, to a shipwreck; but to a battle, or to an execution, could not bring spectators, because there the humanity of individuals is of no use.—It must be, because a sort of gloomy satisfaction, or terrific pleasure, accompanies the gratification of that curiosity which events of this nature are apt to raise in minds of a certain frame.

No parts of Tasso are read with greater relish, than where he describes the darkness, silence, and other horrors, of the enchanted forest: and the poet himself is so sensible of the captivating influence of such ideas over the human imagination, that he makes the catastrophe of the poem in some measure depend upon them. Milton is not less enamoured “of forests and enchantments drear;” as appears from the use to which he applies them in *Comus*: the scenery whereof charms us the more, because it affects our minds, as it did the bewildered lady, and causes “a thousand fantasies”——

—— to throng into the memory,  
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,  
And aery tongues, that syllable mens names  
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.

Forests in every age must have had attractive horrors: otherwise so many nations would not have resorted thither, to celebrate the rites of superstition. And the inventors of what is called the Gothick, but perhaps should rather be called the Saracen, architecture, must have been enraptured with the same imagery, when, in forming and arranging the pillars and ailes of their churches, they were so careful to imitate the rows of lofty trees in a deep grove.

Observe a few children assembled about a fire, and listening to tales of apparitions and witchcraft. You may see them grow pale, and crowd closer and closer through fear: while he who is snug in the chimney corner, and at the greatest distance from the door, considers himself as peculiarly fortunate; because he thinks that, if the ghost should enter, he has a better chance to escape, than if he were in a more exposed situation. And yet, notwithstanding their present, and their apprehension of future, fears, you could not perhaps propose any amusement that would at this time be more acceptable. The same love of such horrors as are not attended with sensible inconvenience continues with us through life:  
and

and Aristotle has affirmed, that the end of tragedy is to purify the soul by the operations of pity and terror.

The mind and body of man are so constituted, that, without action, neither can the one be healthy, nor the other happy. And as bodily exercises, though attended with fatigue, as Dancing, or with some degree of danger, as Hunting, are not on that account the less agreeable; so those things give delight, which rouse the soul, even when they bring along with them horror, anxiety, or sorrow, provided these passions be transient, and their causes rather imaginary than real.

The most perfect models of sublimity are seen in the works of nature. Pyramids, palaces, fireworks, temples, artificial lakes and canals, ships of war, fortifications, hills levelled and caves hollowed by human industry, are mighty efforts, no doubt, and awaken in every beholder a pleasing admiration; but appear as nothing, when we compare them, in respect of magnificence, with mountains, volcanoes, rivers, cataracts, oceans, the expanse of heaven, clouds and storms, thunder and lightning, the sun, moon, and stars. So that, without the study of nature, a true taste in the sublime is absolutely unattainable. And we need not wonder at what is related of Thomson, the author of *the Seasons*; who, on hearing that a certain learned gentleman of London was writing an Epick poem, exclaimed, "He write an Epick poem! it is impossible: he never saw a mountain in his life." This at least is certain, that if we were to strike out of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, those descriptions and sentiments that allude to the grand phenomena of nature, we should deprive these poets of the best part of their sublimity.

And yet, the true sublime may be attained by human art. Music is sublime, when it inspires devotion, courage, or other elevated affections: or when by its mellow and sonorous harmonies it overwhelms the mind with sweet astonishment: or when it infuses that pleasing horror abovementioned; which, when joined

to words descriptive of terrible ideas, it sometimes does very effectually.

Architecture is sublime, when it is large and durable, and withal so simple and well-proportioned as that the eye can take in all its greatness at once. For when an edifice is loaded with ornaments, our attention to them prevents our attending to the whole; and the mind, though it may be amused with the beauty or the variety of the little parts, is not struck with that sudden astonishment, which accompanies the contemplation of sublimity. Hence the Gothick style of building, where it abounds in minute decorations, and where greater pains are employed on the parts, than in adjusting the general harmony of the fabrick, is less sublime than the Grecian, in which proportion, simplicity, and usefulness, are more studied than ornament. It is true, that Gothick buildings may be very sublime: witness the old cathedral churches. But this is owing, rather to their vast magnitude, to the stamp of antiquity that is impressed on them, and to their having been so long appropriated to religious service, than to those peculiarities that distinguish their architecture from the Grecian.

The Chinese mode of building has no pretensions to sublimity; its decorations being still more trivial than the Gothick; and because it derives no dignity from associated ideas, and has no vastness of magnitude to raise admiration. Yet is it not without its charms. There is an air of neatness in it, and of novelty, which to many is pleasing, and which of late it has been much the fashion to imitate.

Painting is sublime, when it displays men invested with great qualities, as bodily strength, or actuated by sublime passions, as courage, devotion, benevolence. That picture by Guido Rheni, which represents Michael triumphing over the evil spirit, I have always admired for its sublimity, though some critics are not pleased with it. The attitude of the angel, who holds a sword in



his right hand in a threatening posture, conveys to me the idea of dignity and grace, as well as of irresistible strength. Nor is the majestic beauty of his person less admirable: and his countenance, though in a slight degree expressive of contempt or indignation, retains that sweet composure, which we think essential to the angelick character. His limbs and wings are, it is true, contrasted: but the contrast is so far from being finical, that, if we consider the action, and the situation, we must allow it to be not only natural, but unavoidable, and such as a winged being might continue in for some time without inconvenience.\* Guido is not equally fortunate in his delineation of the adversary; who is too mean, and too ludicrous, a figure, to cope with an archangel, or to require, for his overthrow, the twentieth part of that force which appears to be exerted against him.—Painting is also sublime, when it imitates grand natural appearances, as mountains, precipices, storms, huge heaps of rocks and ruins, and the like.

At the time when Raphael began to distinguish himself, two styles of painting were cultivated in Italy. His master Pietro Perugino copied nature with an exactness bordering upon servility: so that his figures had less dignity and grace than their originals. Michael Angelo ran into the opposite extreme; and, with an imagination fraught with great ideas, and continually aspiring to sublimity, so enlarged the proportions of nature, as to raise his men to giants, and stretch out every form into an extension that might almost be called monstrous. To the penetration of Raphael both styles seemed to be faulty, and both in an equal degree. The one appeared insipid in its accuracy, and the other almost ridiculous in its extravagance †. He therefore pursued a middle course; tempering

\* Essay on Imagination. Chap. II. Sect. iv. § 3.

† I find that Sir Joshua Reynolds, from whose judgment there is no appeal, thinks more favourably of the Sublime of Michael Angelo. I therefore retract part of what is said above: but I am sure my indulgent Friend will not be offended to see this remark,

pering the fire of Angelo with the caution of Perugino: and thus exhibited the true sublime of painting; wherein the graces of nature are heightened, but nothing is gigantick, disproportioned, or improbable. While we study his Cartoons, we seem to be conversing with a species of men, like ourselves indeed, but of heroick dignity and size.

This great artist is in painting, what Homer is in poetry. Homer magnifies in like manner; and transforms men into heroes and demigods; and, to give the more grandeur to his narrative, sets it off with marvellous events, which, in his time, though not improbable, were however astonishing. But Ariosto, and the authors of the Old Romance, resemble Michael Angelo in exalting their champions, not into heroes, but into giants and monsters. Achilles, though superiour to all men in valour, would not venture to battle without his arms: but a warrior of romance, whether armed or not, could fell a troop of horse to the earth at one blow, tear up trees by the root, and now and then throw a piece of a mountain at the enemy. The true sublime is always natural and credible: but unbounded exaggerations, that surpass all proportion and all belief, are more apt to provoke laughter than astonishment.

Poetry becomes sublime in many ways: and as this is the only fine art, which can at present supply us with examples, I shall from it select a specimen or two of the different sorts of sublimity.

1. Poetry is sublime, when it elevates the mind. This indeed is a general character of greatness. But I speak here of sentiments so happily conceived and expressed, as to raise our affections above the low pursuits of sensuality and avarice, and animate us with the love of virtue and of honour. As a specimen, let me recommend

as I had written it before I met with his admirable Discourse delivered in the Royal Academy, in December, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two. The few pieces I have seen of Michael Angelo must have been in his worst manner.

the account, which Virgil gives in his eighth book, of the person, family, and kingdom of Evander; an Arcadian prince, who, after being trained up in all the discipline of Greece, established himself and his people in that part of Italy, where a few centuries after was built the great metropolis of the Roman empire. In the midst of poverty, that good old man retains a philosophical and a royal dignity. “ This habitation (says he, to Eneas, who had made him a visit) has been honoured with the presence of Hercules himself. Dare, my guest, to despise riches; and do thou also fashion thyself into a likeness of God:” or, as some render it, “ do thou also make thyself worthy of immortality.”

Aude, hospes, contemnere opes; et te quoque dignum  
Finge Deo. —

There is a strength in the expression, whereof our language is not capable. “ I despise the world (says Dryden) when I read it, and myself when I attempt to translate it.”

2. Poetry is sublime, when it conveys a lively idea of any grand appearance in art or nature. A nobler description of this sort I do not at present remember, than that which Virgil gives, in the first book of the Georgick, of a dark night, with wind, rain, and lightning: where Jupiter appears, encompassed with clouds and storms, darting his thunderbolts, and overturning the mountains, while the ocean is roaring, the earth trembling, the wild beasts fled away, the rain pouring down in torrents, the woods resounding to the tempest, and all mankind overwhelmed with consternation.\*

Ipsè

\* The following is a more literal translation: but I know not how to imitate, in modern language, the awful, (I had almost said, the dreadful) simplicity of the original.

High in the midnight storm enthroned, Heaven's Sire  
Hurls from his blazing arm the bolt of fire.  
Earth feels with trembling; every beast is fled;  
And nations prostrate fall, o'erwhelm'd with dread.

Athes

Ipse Pater, media nimborum in nocte, corusca  
 Fulmina molitur dextra; quo maxima motu  
 Terra tremit, fugere feræ, et mortalia corda  
 Per gentes humilis stravit pavor. Ille flagranti  
 Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Keraunia telo  
 Dejicit; ingeminant austris, et densissimus imber;  
 Nunc nemora ingenti vento, nunc littora plangunt.\*

This description astonishes, both by the grandeur, and by the horror, of the scene, which is either wrapt in total darkness, or made visible by the glare of lightning. And the poet has expressed it with the happiest solemnity of style, and a sonorous harmony of numbers.—As examples of the same sort of sublimity, namely of great images with a mixture of horror, I might call the reader's attention to the storm in the beginning of the *Eneid*, the death of *Cacus* in the eighth book, to the account of *Tartarus* in the sixth, and that of the burning of *Troy* in the second. But in the style of dreadful magnificence, nothing is superior, and scarce any thing equal, to *Milton's* representation of hell and chaos, in the first and second books of *Paradise Lost*.

In the concluding paragraph of the same work, there is brought together, with uncommon strength of fancy, and rapidity of narrative, a number of circumstances, wonderfully adapted to the purpose of filling the mind with ideas of terrific grandeur: the descent of the cherubim; the flaming sword; the archangel leading in haste our first parents down from the heights of paradise, and then

Athos rolls headlong, where his lightnings fly,  
 The rocks of Rhodope in ruin lie,  
 Or huge Keraunia. With redoubled rage  
 The torrent rain and bellowing wind engage;  
 Loud in the woods afar the tempests roar,  
 And mountain billows burst in thunder on the shore.

\* *Georg.* I. 328.

disappearing;

disappearing; and, above all, the scene that presents itself on their looking behind them.

They, looking back, all th' eastern cliff beheld  
Of Paradise, so late their happy feat,  
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate  
With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery arms.

To which the last verses form the most striking contrast that can be imagined.

Some natural tears they drop'd, but wiped them soon.  
The world was all before them, where to chuse  
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.  
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps, and flow,  
Through Eden took their solitary way.

The final couplet renews our sorrow; by exhibiting, with picturesque accuracy, the most mournful scene in nature; which yet is so prepared, as to raise comfort, and dispose to resignation. And thus, while we are at once melting in tenderness, elevated with pious hope, and overwhelmed with the grandeur of description, the divine poem concludes. What luxury of mental gratification is here! Who would exchange this frame of mind (if nature could support it) for any other! How exquisitely does the faith of a Christian accord with the noblest feelings of humanity!

3. Poetry is sublime; when, without any great pomp of images or of words, it insures horror by a happy choice of circumstances. When Macbeth (in Shakspeare) goes to consult the witches, he finds them performing rites in a cave; and, upon asking what they were employed about, receives no other answer than this short one, "A deed without a name." One's blood runs cold at the thought, that their work was of so accursed a nature, that they themselves had no name to express it by, or were afraid to speak of it by any name. Here is no solemnity of style, nor any accumulation of  
great

great ideas; yet here is the true sublime; because here is something that astonishes the mind, and fills it, without producing any real inconvenience.

Among other omens, which preceded the death of Dido, Virgil relates, that, when she was making an oblation of wine, milk and incense upon the altar, she observed the milk grow black, and found that the wine was changed into blood. This the poet improves into a circumstance of the utmost horror, when he adds, that she never mentioned it to any person, not even to her sister, who was her confidante on all other occasions: insinuating, that it filled her with so dreadful apprehension, that she had not courage even to attempt to speak of it.—Perhaps I may be more struck with this, than many others are; as I once knew a young man, who was in the same state of mind, after having been frightened in his sleep, or, as he imagined, by a vision, which he had seen about two years before he told me of it. With much intreaty I prevailed on him to give me some account of his dream: but there was one particular, which he said that he would not, nay that he durst not, mention; and, while he was saying so, his haggard eyes, pale countenance, quivering lips, and faltering voice, presented to me such a picture of horror, as I never saw before or since. I ought to add, that he was, in all other respects, in his perfect mind, chearful, and active, and not more than twenty years of age.

Horror has long been a powerful, and a favourite, engine in the hands of the Tragick poet. Eschylus employed it more than any other antient artist. In his play called *the Furies*, he introduced Orestes haunted by a company of those frightful beings; intending thereby an allegorical representation of the torment which that hero suffered in his mind, in consequence of having slain his mother Clytemnestra, for the part she had taken in the murder of his father. But to raise the greater horror in the spectators, the poet was at pains to describe, with amazing force of expression, the appearance  
of

of the Furies; and he brought upon the stage no fewer than fifty of them; whose infernal looks, hideous gestures, and horrible screams, had such effects on the women and children, that, in the subsequent exhibitions of the play, the number of furies was by an express law limited, first to fifteen, and afterwards to twelve. There are, no doubt, sublime strokes in the poet's account of these furies; and there is something very great in the idea of a person haunted by his own thoughts, in the form of such terrific beings. Yet horror of this kind I would hardly call sublime, because it is addressed rather to the eyes, than to the mind; and because it is easier to disfigure a man so, as to make him have the appearance of an ugly woman, than, by a brief description, or well-chosen sentiment, to alarm and astonish the fancy. Shakspeare has, in my opinion, excited horror of more genuine sublimity, and withal more useful in a moral view, when he makes Macbeth, in short and broken starts of exclamation, and without any pomp of images or of words, give an utterance half-suppressed to those dreadful thoughts that were passing in his mind immediately before and after the murder of Duncan, his guest, kinsman, sovereign, and benefactor. The agonies of a guilty conscience were never more forcibly represented, than in this tragedy; which may indeed be said, in the language of Aristotle, to purify the mind by the operation of terror and pity; and which abounds more in that species of the sublime whereof I now speak, than any other performance in the English tongue.—See its merits examined and explained, with the utmost correctness of judgment, beauty of language, and vivacity of imagination, in Mrs. Montagu's *Essay on the writings and genius of Shakspeare*.

4. Poetry is sublime, when it awakens in the mind any great and good affection, as piety, or patriotism. This is one of the noblest effects of the art. The Psalms are remarkable, beyond all other writings, for their power of inspiring devout emotions. But it is

not in this respect only that they are sublime. Of the divine nature they contain the most magnificent descriptions that the soul of man can comprehend. The hundred and fourth psalm, in particular, displays the power and goodness of Providence, in creating and preserving the world, and the various tribes of animals in it, with such majestick brevity and beauty, as it is vain to look for in any human composition. The morning song of Adam and Eve \*, and many other parts of Paradise Lost, are noble effusions of piety, breathed in the most captivating strains: and Thomson's Hymn on the Seasons, if we overlook an unguarded word or two, is not inferior.

Of that sublimity which results from the strong expression of patriotick sentiments, many examples might be quoted from the Latin poets, particularly Virgil, Horace, and Lucan: but there is a passage in Homer that suits the present purpose better than any other that now occurs. While Hector is advancing to attack the Greek intrenchments, an eagle lets fall a wounded serpent in the middle of his army. This Polydamas considers as a bad omen, and advises him to order a retreat. Hector rejects the advice with indignation. " Shall I be deterred from my duty, (says he) and from executing the commands of Jupiter, by the flight of birds? Let them fly on my right hand or on my left, towards the setting or towards the rising sun, I will obey the counsel of Jove, who is the king of gods and of men." And then he adds that memorable aphorism, " To defend our country is the best of all auguries †:" or, as Pope has very well expressed it,

Without a sign, his sword the brave man draws,  
And asks no omen, but his country's cause.

If we attend to all the circumstances, and reflect that both Hector and Homer believed in auguries, we must own that the sentiment is wonderfully great.

\* Par. Lost, book v.

† Εἰς ἰωνὸς ἀριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πατρὸς. Iliad. xii. 243.



I might also quote, from the same book of the Iliad, Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus; which contains the noblest lesson of political wisdom, and the most enlivening motives to magnanimity. I shall not translate it literally, but confine myself to the general scope of the argument; and I shall give it in prose, that it may not seem to derive any part of its dignity from the charm of poetical numbers.

“ Why, O Glaucus, do we receive from our people in Lycia the  
 “ honours of sovereignty, and so liberal a provision? Is it not in the  
 “ hope, that we are to distinguish ourselves by our virtue, as much  
 “ as we are distinguished by our rank? Let us act accordingly :  
 “ that, when they see us encountering the greatest perils of war,  
 “ they may say, we deserve the honours and the dignity which we  
 “ possess. If indeed (continues he) by declining danger we could  
 “ secure ourselves against old age and the grave, I should neither  
 “ fight myself in the front of the battle, nor exhort you to do so.  
 “ But since death is unavoidable, and may assail us from so many  
 “ thousand quarters, let us advance, and either gain renown by  
 “ victory, or by our fall give glory to the conquerour.” The whole  
 is excellent : but the grandeur and generosity of the conclusion can never be too highly applauded.

5. Poetry is also sublime, when it describes in a lively manner the visible effects of any of those passions that give elevation to the character. Such is that passage, in the conclusion of the same twelfth book of the Iliad, which paints the impetuosity and terrible appearance of Hector, storming the intrenchments, and pursuing the enemy to their ships. Extraordinary efforts of magnanimity, valour, or any other virtue, and extraordinary exertions of strength or power, are grand objects, and give sublimity to those pictures or poems, in which they are well represented. All the great poets abound in examples.

Yet in great strength, for example, there may be unwieldiness, or awkwardness, or some other contemptible quality, whereby the

sublime is destroyed. Polyphemus is a match for five hundred Greeks; but he is not a grand object. We hate his barbarity, and despise his folly, too much, to allow him a single grain of admiration. Ulysses, who in the hands of Polypheme was nothing, is incomparably more sublime, when, in walking to his palace, disguised like a beggar, he is insulted, and even kicked, by one of his own slaves, who was, in the service of those rebels that were tempting his queen, plundering his household, and alienating the affections of his people. Homer tells us, that the hero stood firm, without being moved from his place by the stroke; that he deliberated for a moment, whether he should at one blow fell the traitor to the earth; but that patience and prudential thoughts restrained him. The brutal force of the Cyclops is not near so striking as this picture; which displays bodily strength and magnanimity united. For what we despise we never admire; and therefore despicable greatness cannot be sublime.

Homer and Virgil have, each of them, given a description of a horse, which is very much, and justly, celebrated. But they dwell rather upon the swiftness and beauty of the animal, or on such of his passions as have little or no dignity; and therefore their descriptions, though most elegant and harmonious, cannot properly be termed sublime. In the book of Job, we have the picture of a war-horse in the most magnificent style. The inspired poet expatiates upon the nobler qualities of that animal, his strength, impetuosity, and contempt of danger: and several of the words made use of, being figurative, and in their proper meaning expressive of human emotions, convey uncommon vivacity and elevation to the whole passage.

“Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?”—alluding, perhaps, either to the noise of cavalry advancing; or to their speed, which the poet insinuates may be compared to that of lightning. “Canst thou make him afraid

“ as

“ as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible:”—that is, the breath coming from his nostrils, which appear red with distension, make him look as if fire and smoke were issuing from them; an idea, which Virgil has finely expressed in that line,

Collectumque premens volvit sub naribus ignem.

“ He paweth in the valley, and *rejoiceth* in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men. He *mocketh* at fear, and is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;” which probably signifies, according to some translations, “ he looks as if he would swallow the ground\* ; neither *believeth* he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He *saith* among the trumpets, *ba, ba* ;” despises their alarm as much as we do that of a threatening which only provokes our laughter: “ and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.”—Besides the grandeur of the animal, as here painted, the sublimity of the passage is heightened exceedingly by the landscape; which presents to our view an army in order of battle, and makes us think we hear the crashing of armour, and the shouts of encountering multitudes.

In describing what is great, poets often employ sonorous language. This is suitable to the nature of human speech: for while we give utterance to that which elevates our imagination, we are apt to speak louder, and with greater solemnity, than at other times †. It must not however be thought, that high-sounding words are essential to the Sublime. Without a correspondent dignity of thought, or grandeur of images, a sonorous style is ridiculous; and puts one in mind of those persons, who raise great expectation, and assume a look of vast importance, when they have

\* In a very ingenious criticism on this passage in the *Guardian*, these words are differently understood.

† Essay on Poetry and Music: last chapter.

either nothing at all to say, or nothing that is worth notice. That style is sublime, which makes us conceive a great object, or a great effort, in a lively manner; and this may be done, when the words are very plain and simple. Nay, the plainest and simplest words have sometimes a happy effect in setting off what is intrinsically great; as an act of vast bodily strength is the more astonishing, when performed by a slight effort. This sort of sublimity we have in perfection in many of those passages of Holy Writ, that describe the operation of Omnipotence: as, “ God said, Let there be light, “ and there was light:—He spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast:—Thou openest thy hand, they are “ filled with good; thou hidest thy face, and they are troubled.”

It was observed, that the description of the horse in Job derives not a little of its dignity from those words, that properly signify human sentiments, and cannot be applied to an irrational animal, unless with a figurative meaning: “ he *rejoiceth in his strength*; he *mocketh at fear*; he *believeth not* that it is the sound of the trumpet; he *saith* “ among the trumpets, *ba, ba.*” It may now be remarked in general, that the sublime is often heightened, when, by means of figurative language, the qualities of a superiour nature are judiciously applied to what is inferiour. Hence we see in poetry, and in more familiar language, the passions and feelings of rationality ascribed to that which is without reason, and without life, or even to abstract ideas.—On Adam’s eating the forbidden fruit,

Earth trembled from her entrails, as again  
 In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan;  
 Sky lower’d, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops  
 Wept, at completing of the mortal sin  
 Original.

Who is not sensible of the greatness of the thought conveyed in these words; which represent the earth and heaven affected with horror at the sin then committed, and nature, or the universe, uttering

tering in low thunder a groan of anguish? Had the poet simply said, that there was an earthquake, that the sky grew dark, and that some drops of rain fell, the account would no doubt have been sublime, as he would have given it. But is it not much more so, when we are informed, that this convulsion of nature was the effect of a sort of sensation diffused at that instant through the whole inanimate world? How dreadful must be the enormity of that guilt, which could produce an event so great, and withal so preternatural! Here are two sources of the sublime: the prodigy strikes with horror; the vastness of the idea overwhelms with astonishment.

In this place an unskilful poet would probably have brought on such a storm of thunder and lightning, and so violent an earthquake, as must have overturned the mountains, and set the woods on fire. But Milton, with better judgment, makes the alarm of that deep and awful kind, which cannot express itself in any other way, than by an inward and universal trembling: a sensation more affecting to the fancy, than those passions are, which vent themselves in outrageous behaviour; even as that sorrow is the most pathetick, which deprives one of the power of lamentation, and discovers itself only by fainting and groans. Besides, if this convulsion of the universe had been more violent, the unhappy offenders must have been confounded and terrified; which would not have suited the poet's purpose. For he tells us, and indeed the circumstances that follow in the narrative (which, by the by, are exquisitely contrived) do all suppose, that our first parents were so intent on gratifying their impious appetite, that they took no notice of the prodigies, which accompanied the transgression.

Writers of weak judgment, when they attempt the sublime, are apt to exaggerate description, till they make it ridiculous. And to Milton's prudent reserve on this occasion I cannot quote a better contrast, than that passage in Ovid, where the Earth, as a person, lifts up her head, and, holding her hand before her face, complains

to Jupiter, in a voice almost inarticulate with thirst, of the torments she was suffering from the conflagration brought upon her by the rashness of Phaeton; and, at the end of her speech, half-suffocated with fire and smoke, draws back her head into the centre of her body. This is mere burlesque. Our fancy cannot be reconciled to so extravagant a fiction, nor conceive the earth to be an animal of so hideous and so ridiculous a form. But no art is necessary to reconcile us to the idea of the earth trembling with preternatural horror at such a lamentable catastrophe as the fall of Adam and Eve; the first crime by which the sublunary creation was polluted; and a crime, that

Brought death into the world, and all our woe.

In the poetical parts of Scripture, animation and sentiment are often, with the happiest effect, applied to things inanimate. “Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills rejoice together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth. — Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? — God sendeth forth light, and it goeth; he calleth it again, and it obeyeth with fear.” — These and the like figures convey a lively and lofty idea of Divine Power, to which the inanimate parts of nature are as obsequious, as if they had intelligence and activity.

A common sentiment may be made sublime, when it is illustrated by an allusion to a grand object. “There is not, says Addison, a sight in nature so mortifying, as that of a distracted person, when his imagination is troubled, and his whole soul disordered and confused.” This is true; but there is nothing very striking in it. But when the author adds, “Babylon in ruins is not so melancholy a spectacle,” he gives great dignity to the thought, by setting before us one of the most hideous pictures of desolation that ever was seen by mortal eyes; and at the same time declaring, what is no more than the truth, that even this is not so mournful

a sight as the other. — “ The evils of life seem more terrible when anticipated than they are found to be in reality,” is no uncommon observation: but the same elegant author improves it into a sublime allegory, when he says, “ The evils of this life appear, like rocks and precipices, rugged and barren at a distance; but, at our nearer approach, we find little fruitful spots and refreshing springs mixed with the harshness and deformities of nature.” This happy illustration pleases, not only by giving perspicuity to the thought, but also by suggesting the magnificent idea of a ridge of rocky precipices, as they appear at a distance to the traveller, and as he finds them to be on coming up to them. And it pleases yet further, when we compare the object alluded to with the idea signified, and find so perfect a coincidence.

Things, as well as sentiments, may be made sublime by the same artifice. Bees are animals of wonderful sagacity, but of too diminutive a form to captivate our imagination. But Virgil describes their economy with so many fine allusions to the more elevated parts of nature, as raise our astonishment, both at the skill of the poet, and at the genius of his favourite insect; whose little size becomes matter of admiration, when we consider those noble instincts wherewith the Creatour has endowed it.

It may seem strange, and yet it is true, that the sublime is sometimes attained by a total want of expression: and this may happen, when by silence, or by hiding the face, we are made to understand, that there is in the mind something too great for utterance. In a picture representing the sacrifice of Iphigenia, a Grecian painter\* displayed varieties of sorrow in the faces of the other persons present; but, despairing to give any adequate expression to the countenance of her father Agamemnon, he made him cover it with his hands: an idea much admired by the antient artists, and often

\* Timanthes. See Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxv. 36. Val. Max. viii. 11. Quintil. ii. 14.

imitated by the modern; as what was likely to raise in the spectator a more exquisite horror, than any positive expression that could have been given to the face of the parent. Indeed, on such an occasion, it would be natural for a father to hide his face, as unable to endure so dreadful a sight; so that this contrivance was not only the most affecting to the beholder, but also the most proper in itself.

When Ulysses, in Homer, pays his compliments to the Grecian ghosts whom he had called up by incantation, we are told that, on seeing their old acquaintance and fellow-foldier, they all conversed with him, Ajax only excepted; who, still resenting the affront he had received at Troy, when Ulysses in opposition to his claim obtained the arms of Achilles, stood aloof, disdainingly to take notice of his rival, or to return any answer to his kind expostulations. It is certain, that no less a person than Virgil admired this incident; for he copies it in his account of the infernal world: where Eneas, meeting Dido, endeavours to excuse his desertion of her, urging his unwillingness, and the command of Jupiter: but she, says the poet, turned her eyes another way, and minded no more what he said, than if she had been flint or marble.

This silence of Dido has been blamed by a very learned critic: who seems to think, that, though it was becoming in Ajax not to speak, because he was a hero, it would be natural for an injured woman to upbraid a faithless lover with the keenest reproaches. But I take the remark, rather as a joke upon that volubility of tongue, which satirists have imputed to the female sex, than as a serious criticism. Dido, as described by Virgil, is a more dignified character, than Homer's Ajax; and therefore, if the silence was majestic in him, on account of his greatness of mind, it must be equally so in her. If he, as a hero, was superiour to other men, she, as a heroine, was superiour to other women.

Some



Some writers (and the same thing is too often attempted in the pulpit) have endeavoured to express, by an elaborate soliloquy, what they suppose might pass in the mind of Abraham, on being commanded to offer up his Son. This I cannot but think injudicious. It seems to detract not a little from the Father of the faithful, to represent him as deliberating whether or not he should obey God's command, or conjecturing for what purpose so hard a task had been enjoined him. Let a man of sensibility, after hearing one of those rhetorical flourishes, read the narrative in the words of Moses, and he will *feel*, how much more affecting the one is in its simple majesty, than the other in its gaudy ornaments; and what inexpressible sublimity the character of the great Patriarch derives from his emphatick silence and prompt obedience. He knew the command was divine, and consequently good; and that, whatever his paternal emotions might be, his duty was, instantly to obey. He therefore "rose up early in the morning," and began that journey, which he then thought would have so melancholy a termination. I may add, that there is something almost equally great in the silent submission of Isaac; who, being at this time about thirty years of age, might have attempted resistance or escape, if his faith and his piety had not been worthy the Son of such a Father.

Things in themselves great may become more or less sublime, according to the nature of the allusions, whereby the description of them is illustrated. Longinus, who seems to have thought not so favourably of the *Odyssey* as it deserves, represents the genius of the author as in the decline when he wrote that poem; but characterises that decline by two noble similitudes. "In the *Odyssey*" " (says he) Homer may be likened to the setting sun, whose grandeur still remains, though his beams have lost their meridian heat." What a beautiful idea! Does it not even adorn the object which it is intended in some degree to depreciate? And

a little after he has this remark. “ Like the ocean, whose shores, “ when deserted by the tide, mark out the extent to which it sometimes flows, so Homer’s genius, when ebbing into the fables of “ the *Odyſſey*, plainly discovers, how vast it once must have been.” To be extolled by ordinary writers is not so flattering, as to be censured by a critick like Longinus, who tempers his blame with so much politeness and dignity. Indeed, it has been remarked of him, that he exemplifies every kind of good writing; so as in grandeur of thought, and beauty of expression, to vie with the author whom he celebrates.

Instances of ideas or images intrinsically great, rendered more so by the allusions employed in describing them, are common in Homer, Virgil, Milton, and all the sublime poets. So many examples crowd on one’s memory, that one knows not which to prefer. Achilles in arms is a grand idea: but Homer throws upon it additional splendor, when he compares him to the moon, to the blaze of a beacon seen at a distance in a night of tempest, to a star or comet, and to the sun. Milton magnifies the strength and intrepidity of Satan, when he says,

Satan alarm’d,  
Collecting all his might, dilated stood  
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved;  
His stature reach’d the sky, and on his crest  
Sat horror.

The fires lighted up in the Grecian camp, and scattered over the plains of Troy, would be a beautiful appearance: but Homer makes it rise upon us in glory, by comparing them to the moon and stars illuminating the sky, when the clouds separate, and the pure ether shines forth in all the magnificence of midnight.

But observe, that great ideas are not always alluded to, in the description of great objects. For of two things, different in nature,

ture, that which is upon the whole inferiour may possess a quality or two in a more exquisite degree, than that which is in all other respects more elevated. How superiour is a man, especially a wise man, and still more especially, the wisest, and one of the greatest of men, to a vegetable! And yet we are warranted, on the best authority, to say, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies of the field.

We must therefore, in all cases, attend to that circumstance of likeness, upon which an allusion is founded. Homer compares Hector to a rock tumbling from the top of a mountain. Were we to hear nothing more of this similitude, it might appear even ridiculous; for one might imagine it was intended to paint the particular manner, in which that hero descended from a high to a lower ground: and surely, a man rolling headlong, like a stone, down a steep place, is an image of neither dignity nor elegance; nor can it raise any person in our esteem, to say of him that he is like a stone. But when we learn, that the poet means by this comparison to inform us, that Hector was irresistible while he advanced, and immoveable when he stopt, we are struck with the propriety, and at the same time with the greatness, of the allusion; for it heightens what we had before conceived of the warrior's impetuosity. If a huge fragment of a rock, torn from the top of a mountain by a winter torrent, were rolling and thundering down to the plain, no human power would be able to oppose it; and when it stopt, very great power would be necessary to move it.

“ I will make Babylon a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction.”\* The instrument alluded to is one of the meanest; and yet the idea conveyed by the allusion is exceedingly great. For it is not the manner, but the consequences, of the destruction, that are here painted: it will be so complete, that not the least memorial of that city shall

\* Isaiah, chap. xiv.

remain:

remain: even as on a floor that is swept no trace is to be seen of the dust that was there formerly, or of the figures that might have been drawn in it. The allusion has also this emphatical meaning, that the people of Babylon are a nuisance, and that the earth will be purified by their being driven away; and it implies further, that all the efforts of human power are but dust, when the arm of the Almighty is lifted up against them.

“Ruin fiercely drives Her plowshare o’er creation,” says Young, speaking of the end of the world. The driving of a plow over a field is not a grand object. Yet the figure conveys a sublime idea to those who know, that some antient nations, when they meant to destroy a city, not only rased the buildings, but plowed up the foundation; to intimate, that it was never to be rebuilt any more. The poet’s allegory, therefore, typifies a destruction that is to be total, and final.—If I were to criticize it further, I would say, that it is pity it should be above the apprehension of common readers: for the sublime is generally the worse for being wrapt up in learning, or in any other disguise. What we do not clearly perceive we cannot rationally admire. It is true, that, where sublimity with horror is intended, a certain degree of darkness may have a good effect; as unknown objects, viewed through mist or in the twilight, appear of greater size than the reality, and of more hideous proportion. But the example before us is rather ambiguous, than obscure: the learned reader knows that it comprehends a grand allusion; but to the unlearned it may seem inadequate to the subject, by reason of its meanness.

Out of many that occur I quote a few examples, to show, according to what has been already observed, that the sublime is not always accompanied with sonorous expression, or a pomp of images. These, when too anxiously sought after, or when they are not supported with a correspondent majesty of thought, are called Bombast or False Sublime; an unpardonable impropriety; which

which has in serious writing as bad an effect, as ignorance united with impudence, or a solemn behaviour with a mean understanding, would have in conversation. Most people, who are in earnest in what they say, naturally elevate their voice and style, when they speak of what is great; but, if they be of polite manners, that elevation is tempered with modesty; and they rather lay restraint on their feelings, than express them with the most emphatical utterance. Good writers, in like manner, rise in sound and solemnity of phrase, when their thoughts aspire to sublimity; but their style is always simple, and their ornaments natural: and they often throw out noble ideas in the plainest words, and without any ornament.

Yet he, who aims at the sublime, must not trust so implicitly to the grandeur of his thoughts, as to be careless about his expression. Well chosen words, and an elegant arrangement of them, are justly reckoned by Longinus among the sources of sublimity. Even when the thought is both good and great, the greatness, or the elegance, may be lost or lessened by an unskilful writer: and that in several ways.

First, by too minute description, and too many words. For, when we are engrossed by admiration or astonishment, it is not natural for us to speak much, or attend to the more diminutive qualities of that which we contemplate. On seeing a lofty edifice, if the first thing we did were to count the windows, or the panes of glass in each, it would be a sign of bad taste, and a proof, that we wanted either imagination to comprehend, or sensibility to take pleasure in, the grandeur of the whole. Were a hero to appear in arms before us, we should not think of looking at his teeth, or observing whether his beard were close shaved, or his nails nicely cut; at first, it is likely, that we should take notice of little besides his general appearance, and more striking features: or, if those other small matters were to engage our whole attention, might it not

justly be said, that we had no true sense of the dignity of the person, nor any curiosity to know those particulars concerning him, which alone were worthy to be known? Writers, therefore, who describe too nicely the minute parts of a grand object, must both have disengaged their own minds, and must also withdraw ours, from the admiration of what is sublime in it. A few examples will make this plain.

Had Homer or had Milton been to describe the chariot of the Sun, he would probably have confined himself to its dazzling appearance, or vast magnitude, or some of those other qualities of it, which at the first glance might be supposed to fill the imagination, and raise the astonishment, of the beholder. But when Ovid tells us, that the axle was of gold, the pole of gold, the outward circumference of the wheels of gold, but that the spokes were silver \*, we are not astonished at all; and are apt to think, from the minuteness of the account, that the author had examined this chariot, rather with the curiosity of a coachmaker or silversmith, than with the eye of a poet or painter. Such a detail resembles an inventory more than a description: as if it were material, in order to form a right idea of Phaeton's unlucky expedition, that we should know the *value* of the chariot in which he rode.

We read, in a certain author, of a giant, who in his wrath tore off the top of a promontory, and flung it at the enemy; and so huge was the mass, that you might, says he, have seen goats browsing on it as it flew through the air. This is unnatural and ridiculous. A spectator would have been too much confounded at the force, that could wield it, and at the astonishing appearance of such a ruin hurled through the sky, to attend to any circumstance so minute as what is here specified. Besides, the motion of such a fragment must have been too rapid, to allow the goats to keep their ground,

\* Aureus axis erat, temo aureus, aureæ summæ  
Curvatura rotæ, radiorum argenteus ordo. Metam. ii.

or to admit the possibility of seeing them in the act of feeding. So that, whatever this idea may add to the magnitude, it must take away from the swiftness; and make the vast body seem to our imagination, as if it had loitered, or stopt, in its course, to give the beholder time to examine its curiosities, and that the poor goats might be in no danger of losing their hold.

In sublime description, though the circumstances that are specified be few, yet, if they be well chosen and great, the reader's fancy will compleat the picture: and often, as already hinted, the image will not be less astonishing, if in its general appearance there be something indefinite. When Hector forces the Greek intrenchments, the poet describes him by several grand allusions, and by this in particular,

Now rushing in the furious chief appears,

*Gloomy as night*, and shakes two shining spears. \*

In what respect he resembled night, Homer leaves to be determined by the reader's fancy. This conveys no positive idea; but we are hence led to imagine, that there must have been something peculiarly dark and dreadful in his look, as it appeared to the enemy: and thus we make the picture stronger perhaps than it would have been, if the author had drawn it more minutely †. A genius like

Cowley

\* Pope's Homer. Book 12. near the end.

† Speculative men often err, from an immoderate attachment to some one principle; of which, because it holds in many cases, they think it must hold in all. Gilbert, in the course of his observations on the magnet, grew so fond of magnetism, as to fancy, that the phenomena of the universe might be solved by it. And electricity seems now to have become almost as great a favourite of many ingenious philosophers.

That poetical description ought to be distinct and lively, and such as might both assist the fancy, and direct the hand, of the painter, is an acknowledged truth in criticism. The best poets are the most picturesque. Homer is in this respect so admirable, that he has been justly called the prince of painters, as well as of poets. And one cause of the insipidity of the *Henriade* is, that its scenery and images are described in too general terms, and want those distinguishing peculiarities that captivate the fancy, and interest the passions.

Cowley would have interrupted the narrative, in order to enumerate all those particulars in which Hector resembled night; comparing his shield to the full moon; his eyes to stars; the flashing of his armour to comets and meteors; the dust that flew about him,

to

But should every thing in poetry be picturesque? No. To the right imitation of nature shade is necessary, as well as light. We may be powerfully affected by that which is not visible at all; and of visible things some cannot be, and many ought not to be, painted: and the mind is often better pleased with images of its own forming, or finishing, than with those that are set before it complete in all their colours and proportions. From the passage referred to in the text, and from many others that might be quoted, it appears that in description Homer himself is not always definite; and that he knows how to affect his readers by leaving occasionally a part of his picture to be supplied by their imagination. Of Helen's person he gives no minute account: but, when he tells us, that her loveliness was such as to extort the admiration of the *oldest* Trojan senators, who had, and who owned they had, so good reason to dislike her, he gives a higher idea of the power of her charms, than could have been conveyed by any description of her eyes, mouth, shape, and other distinguishing beauties.

Algarotti is of opinion, that the poetry of the northern nations is, in general, less picturesque than that of Italy. Virgil, says he, gives so exact a representation of Dido's dress when she goes a hunting, that a painter might follow it in every particular.

Tandem progreditur, magna stipante caterva,  
Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo;  
Cui phætra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,  
Aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem.

Whereas Milton describes the *nuda bellezza* of Eve by general terms and abstract ideas, that present no image to the mind.

Grace was in all her steps, *heaven* in her eye,  
In every gesture *dignity* and *love*.

Of this criticism I would observe, that the censure here passed on the poetry of the north, as compared with that of the *modern* Italians at least, will hardly be admitted by those who understand and have read our great poets, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Thomson; from whom instances without number might be brought of imagery as vivid and particular, as it is in the power of language to convey. Milton, where his subject requires that he should be *exactly descriptive*, as in his fourth, seventh, ninth, and eleventh books, is in this respect not inferior to Homer himself. Indeed, when his scene of action lies *Beyond the visible diurnal sphere*; when, with a view to raise astonishment or horror, he paints what was never seen by mortal eye, it is impossible for him to be strictly picturesque. Figures so deeply shaded cannot present a definite outline: forms of such terrific grandeur must be to a certain degree invested with darkness.

As



to clouds and darknes; the clangour of his weapons to the scream of the owl; the terror he struck into the enemy, to the fear occasioned by apparitions; with perhaps a great deal more to the same purpose: which would have taken off our attention from the hero, and set us a wondering at the singularity of the author's wit. It ought to be considered, that the rapidity of Hector's motion requires a correspondent rapidity in the narrative, and leaves no time for long description; and it may be supposed, that the persons who saw him would not stand gazing, and making similies, but would fly before him if they were Greeks, or rush on along with him if they were his own people.

When an author, in exhibiting what he thinks great, says every thing that can be said, he confounds his readers with the multitude of circumstances; and, instead of rousing their imagination, leaves it

As to the description objected to by the critick:—I think it would *not* have been improved by being made more particular. Nor is the example at all parallel to that of Dido. The varieties of *dress* are innumerable: and if the poet meant that we should have a distinct idea of Dido's attire, it was necessary for him to describe it as minutely as he has done. But no minute description is necessary to present the *nuda bellezza* of Eve to our imagination, or to improve the idea which in a case of this kind every imagination would form for itself.

Algarotti has overlooked a very material circumstance; namely, that this account of Adam's first interview with Eve is given by Adam himself to an angel; who needed no information on the subject of her beauty, because he had seen her; and to whom it would have been highly indecent to particularize her bodily perfections. Adam, therefore, is brief in this part of the narrative; and insinuates, that, at her first appearance, his attention was chiefly engaged by the *delicacy* and the *dignity* of her *mind*, as they displayed themselves externally in her looks and demeanour. In a word, the sanctity of the state of innocence, the purity of the loves of Paradise, the sublime character of the speaker, the veneration due to the hearer, and that majesty of thought and of style which so peculiarly characterises the divine poem, would all have been violated, if the poet's ideas had in this place been conformable to those of the Critick. Algarotti was probably thinking of the luscious pictures of Tasso, and the sensualities of Rinaldo and Armida: but Milton was conversing with Gods, breathing "empyrean air," and describing "*immortal* fruits of joy and love." I know not whether any part of the poem does more honour to his judgment.

in a state of indolence, by giving it nothing to do; making them at the same time suspect, that, as he has but few great ideas to offer, he is determined to make the most of what he has. Besides, long details encumber the narrative, and lengthen the poem without necessity. Brief description, therefore, and concise expression, may be considered as essential to the sublime.

And no where do they promote it so effectually, as in the poetical and historical parts of Scripture; which, however, more than any other compositions, have had their grandeur impaired by the verbosity of paraphrase. Castalio, in his *Sacred Dialogues*, is so imprudent in this respect, that, if his character as a man of learning and piety were not thoroughly established, we should be tempted to think he had meant to burlesque some passages of the Old Testament. He makes Abraham (for example), while preparing entertainment for the angels, baffle about with the officiousness and prattle of one of Fielding's landladies. Indeed these Dialogues are so frequently farcical, not to say indecent, that I wonder the reading of them is not discontinued in our schools.—I know it has been said, in their behalf, that the language is good, being formed on the model of Terence. But what idea of propriety in writing can he have, who applies the style of comedy to the illustration of Sacred History? What would be thought of an English divine, who should in his sermons imitate the phraseology of Mercutio, Benedick, or Will Honeycomb? Nor is Castalio correct, even in this sense of the word. He is often harsh: he admits modes of expression, that are not in Terence, or in any good writer: and his desire of diffusing a classical air through his work makes him give a new and ambiguous meaning to Roman words\*, where, if he had adopted the common, and what may be called the technical, terms of Theology, he would have expressed himself more clearly, and without any real impropriety.

\* As when he uses *adventitius* for *profelyte*, *genius* for *angel*, *Vejupiter* for *diabolus*, &c.

Our poetical paraphrases of the Psalms are not less injurious to the original. Sternhold and Hopkins are confessedly beneath criticism; yet to those, who would rather see in the pulpit a threadbare coat than a laced one, are not in their rustick guise more offensive, than Brady and Tate in their finical ornaments. If we look into Buchanan, what can we say, but that the learned author, with great command of Latin expression, had no true relish for the emphatick conciseness, and unadorned simplicity, of the inspired poets? Arthur Johnston is not so verbose, and has of course more vigour: but his choice of a couplet, which keeps the reader always in mind of the puerile epistles of Ovid, was singularly injudicious.—As psalms may, in prose, as easily, as in verse, be adapted to musick, why should we seek to force those divine strains into the measures of Roman, or of modern, song? He who transformed Livy into Iambicks, and Virgil into monkish rhyme, did not in my opinion act more absurdly. In fact, sentiments of devotion are rather depressed than elevated by the arts of the European versifier.

Secondly: Though an author's ideas be great, they may yet fall short of sublimity by excessive amplification. Hyperbolic phrases, for reasons assigned in another place \*, are often natural, and may therefore promote the sublime; but if they are not used with discretion and a due regard to the proportions of nature, they become ridiculous.

A translator of Virgil concludes that elegant description (in the second Eneid) of the felling of a mountain-ash, with this enormous exaggeration. The tree, he says,

Headlong with half the shatter'd mountain flies,

And stretch'd out, huge in length, th' unmeasured ruin lies.

Before we can admit this hyperbole to be in any degree tolerable, we must suppose, either that the mountain was a hillock, or that the tree must have been at least a thousand yards high and fifty in diameter. Virgil only says, with his usual propriety;

\* Essay on Poetry and Musick. Part ii. chap. 1. sect. 3.

— traxitque jugis avolsa ruinam.

And drags a ruin from the mountain's brow.

When a certain poet speaks of one of his champions destroying a troop of horse with a single blow; and of another, whose impetuosity was such, that he fought for a considerable time after his head was cut off; he conveys to us the idea, not of strength or courage in the warriors, but of folly in himself. To magnify in this manner is as easy, as to multiply by a thousand; which only requires, that three ciphers be subjoined to the sum. At this rate, every child may be a sublime writer; the only qualifications necessary to contrive such things being, ignorance of nature, and a total disregard both to probability and to possibility. But nothing is sublime, that does not create in the mind a *pleasing* astonishment; and nothing can please a rational being, but what is consistent with itself, and regulated by the standard of nature.

When Cowley attempts to be great, he frequently becomes monstrous\*. A true poet exhibits the most magnificent ideas without any apparent effort; as if they were familiar to him, and such as he can mould and manage at his pleasure. The one labours ineffectually, and awkwardly, to do what is above his strength; and makes himself ridiculous, by showing at once his vanity, and his weakness: of the other, after he has, with ease and with grace, performed the greatest exertions, we say, that "half his strength he put not forth." The former reminds one of Aferopeus in the Iliad, straining with all his might, and distorting his body in vain, to wrench the spear of Achilles from the bank, into which, when flung by the hero's arm, it had penetrated to the middle: the latter may be compared to Achilles himself, who laying his hand upon it draws it forth at once. †

\* See the Davideis *passim*, particularly the account of Goliah.

† Iliad xxi. 170. 200.

Thirdly:

Thirdly: Mean words and mean circumstances, introduced in the description of what is great or elegant, will destroy the sublimity, and debase the beauty. The Duke of Buckingham, in some complimentary verses addressed to Pope, has this couplet,

And yet so wonderful sublime a thing;  
As the great Iliad scarce could make me sing.

The passage is not much elevated, it is true: yet who does not see, that the little dignity it has is debased by the word *thing*; which is chosen merely because it happens to make a rhyme? “Homer’s Iliad is a sublime thing”—the phrase would be despicable even in prose.

Take an example of a mean circumstance from Blackmore’s Paraphrase of Job: a work in which one may find specimens of every sort of bad writing.

I solemnly pronounce, that I believe  
My blest Redeemer does for ever live.  
When future ages shall their circuit end,  
And bankrupt Time shall his last minute spend,  
Then he from heaven in triumph shall descend.

How groveling must be the imagination of a writer, who, in meditating on a passage so sublime, and a subject so awful, can bring himself to think and speak of bankruptcy! Such an idea, in such a place, is contemptible beyond expression. And its absurdity is equal to its meanness. A bankrupt is a person, who is either pitied for having lost, or blamed for having squandered, the money with which he ought to have paid his debts. But who can imagine, that, at the end of the world, Time will be either blamed or pitied, for having squandered, or lost his minutes!

Before I conclude, I must be a little more particular in describing the nature of what I call mean expressions: for against them I am anxious that we be more especially on our guard; first,

because they are a grievous blemish in every sort of elegant writing ; and, secondly, because in the provincial dialects they abound to such a degree, that without great attention, or much good advice, it is not easy for us to avoid them.

And first ; Those words are not mean, which are so necessary ~~at~~ all times, that it is impossible to speak without them on any subject. And most of the classical words in every tongue are of this character. Words are not mean, because they are plain ; nor elegant, because none but men of learning understand them : on the contrary, every thing in style is blameable, which is obscure or ambiguous to an attentive reader. We may have heard some persons celebrated for a *fine* style, because they were on every occasion dragging in strange words, to show their learning. But this is contrary to every rule of sound criticism, and to the practice of all good writers. “ Let there be light, and there was light,” is a much more elegant sentence than, “ Let light irradiate the universe, and instantly light flashed into existence :” the former consists of words, that no person who knows English can misunderstand ; the latter has more words than are necessary, and those are affected and ill-chosen, and such as he only can understand, who knows something of Latin, as well as of English. It is said of the style of Demosthenes, that, though the most artful that had ever appeared in Greece, there was not a phrase in it, which the meanest Athenian citizen did not understand. And in fact, the most elegant authors are in every language the most perspicuous ; as Addison and Swift, in English ; Cesar and Cicero, in Latin ; Metastasio, Tasso, and Ariosto, in Italian ; and Vertot, Boileau, and the Archbishop of Cambray, in French. Uncommon expressions are in general to be avoided, where they can be avoided. It is pedantry to affect them. And therefore, we must not imagine, that words are mean, or not elegant, merely because they are common.

But

But fecondly ; Many words there are in every tongue, which are not ufed, except by illiterate perfons, or on very familiar occafions, or in order to exprefs what the decorum of polite fociety requires that we conceal : and thefe may be called *mean words* ; and are never to be introduced in fublime defcription, in elegant writing, or on any folemn or ferious topick.

Such, in the firft place, are vulgar proverbs. Thefe, though they may have a good meaning, are too familiar to find a place in good ftyle. We have heard common proverbs, particularly thofe of this country, celebrated for their force and truth : and fome may perhaps wonder to fee them proferibed as inelegant. I allow them to be emphatical, both in this and in other countries ; for otherwife, nobody would think it worth while to remember them. But ftill they form a part of the vulgar dialect, and are therefore themfelves vulgar. One of the common people may be a perfon of great worth and fenfe : but place him in fashionable company, and both you and he will perceive, that there is fomething awkward in his appearance ; you may efteem him for his virtue, but cannot reconcile yourfelf to his air and manner ; and you muft be fenfible that he and his prefent associates are not well futed to one another. Sancho Pança is in many things ridiculous, but in nothing more than in his ftyle, which is almoft entirely made up of proverbs. In prayers and fermons, and on every folemn occafion, one muft feel that thefe aphorifms would have a bad effect, and give a ludicrous turn both to the fubject and to the fpeaker. Even in converfation they are rarely ufed by perfons of polite manners, as they not only favour of vulgarity, but alfo breed fufpicion of a barren fancy : for he who retails proverbs gives only what he has borrowed ; that is, what he has heard from others : and borrowing generally implies poverty.

Common forms of compliment, though innocent in themfelves, and though in fociety agreeable, becaufe customary, muft not ap-

pear in elegant writing : first, because they are too familiar to the ear, being used on every trivial occasion ; and secondly, because they derive their meaning from the manners of particular times and places. How ridiculous would it be, if a translator of Virgil were to make Eneas introduce himself to Dido, with these words,

Madam, Your Majesty beholds in me  
Your most obliged, obedient, humble servant,  
Eneas, prince of Troy !

A painter, who would represent the interview, might with equal propriety dress the Trojan in a full-bottomed wig, with a hat and feather under his arm, and make him bend his body to the ground in all the formality of a minuet-bow. There is great dignity in the complimentary expressions of Homer. Priam addresses the most dreadful of all his enemies, by the appellation of “ Godlike Achilles \*.” Achilles begins a speech to Ulysses with these words, “ O wise Ulysses, descended from Jove ;” and calls Ajax (who, by the by, had spoken to him with provoking bitterness) “ Divine Ajax, son of Telamon, prince of the people.” †—Milton is perhaps still more attentive to this decorum ; as his persons are of greater dignity than heroes. Adam addresses Eve in these exalted terms,

Daughter of God and man, accomplish'd Eve —  
Best image of myself, and dearer half —  
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,  
Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight —

and Eve's complaisance to her husband is equally sublime ;

Offspring of heaven and earth, and all earth's Lord —  
O thou, in whom my thoughts find all repose,  
My glory, my perfection —

Such compliments are not made vulgar by common use ; and have,

\* Iliad. xxiv.

† Iliad. ix.

besides,



besides, a significancy, which all the world would acknowledge to be solemn and majestick.

A third class of expressions, that by their meanness would debase every sort of good writing, are those idioms, commonly called *cant*; a jargon introduced by ignorant or affected persons, and which the most perfect acquaintance with every good author in a language would not enable one to understand. Their nature may be better known from a few examples, than from a general definition. To say, of a person, whose conversation is tedious, that he is *a bore*; of a drunk man, that he is *in liquor*, that he is *disguised*, that he is *half seas over*, that he *has his load*, or that he *clips the king's english*; of one who plays with an intention to lose, that he *plays booty*; of one, who has nothing to reply, that he is *dumbfounded*; of a transaction committed to writing, that it is taken down *in black and white*; of a person baffled in any enterprise, that he is *beat hollow*, that he has received *check-mate*, or that he is *routed horse foot and dragoons*; of one who arrives on the very point of being too late, that he has *saved his distance*; of one, who has enriched himself by any business, that he has *feather'd his nest*: — these, and the like idioms, are all cant: they derive no authority from the analogy or grammar of a language; and polite writers and speakers, unless when they mean to speak or write ludicrously, avoid them as vulgarities of the lowest order.

There are some professions, that have a peculiar dialect; or certain phrases at least, which are not understood by people of other professions. Thus seamen make use of terms, which none but seamen are acquainted with: and the same thing is true of architects, painters, musicians, and many other artists. Now in sublime writings such words are to be avoided; partly because, being technical, they have something of a vulgar appearance; and chiefly, because to the greater part of readers they are unintelligible. That

passage of Dryden's Virgil, in which he absurdly imitates the sea-dialect, has often been repeated and censured :

Tack to the larboard, and stand out to sea,  
Veer starboard sea and land.

and is chargeable with something worse than affectation ; for I am assured by an experienced mariner, that it has no meaning. — Milton sometimes errs in this way ; especially when he alludes to architecture and astronomy. He speaks of *cornice*, *freeze*, and *architrave*, and of rays *culminating from the equator* ; which is very unfuitable to the heroick style. For, as Addison well observes, “ It is one of the greatest beauties of poetry to make hard things “ intelligible, and to deliver what is abstruse of itself in such easy “ language, as may be understood by ordinary readers. Besides “ (continues he) the knowledge of a poet should rather seem born “ with him, or inspired, than drawn from books and systems.” True poetry is addressed to all mankind ; and therefore its ideas are general ; and its language ought to be so plain, as that every person acquainted with the poetical dialect may understand it.

It is scarce necessary to add, that all phrases are mean, which come under the denomination of barbarism, or provincial idiom ; because they suggest the ideas of vulgar things, and illiterate persons. Meanness blended with dignity is one of those incongruities that provoke laughter. And therefore provincial idioms introduced in a solemn subject would make it, or the author at least, ridiculous. The speeches, in Ovid, of Ajax and Ulysses contending for the armour of Achilles, cannot be called sublime ; but artful they are, and elegant, in a high degree. That of Ajax has been translated with tolerable exactness into one of the vulgar dialects of North Britain. When we read the original, we are seriously affected : but when we look into the Scotch version, we immediately fall a laughing. I was struck with this, when a schoolboy,

but could not at that time account for it. The thoughts were nearly the same in both: what then could make the one solemn, and the other ridiculous? It is the mixture of mean words and serious sentiments, and of clownish and heroick manners, contrasted with what we remember of the original, that produces a jumble of discordant ideas; and such a jumble, as may be found in most ludicrous appearances when we analyse them.\*

The last thing I shall mention upon this head is, that turns of wit have a bad effect in sublime writing: for one does not naturally think of witticism, when one is engrossed by any of those grand ideas that raise pleasing astonishment. In fact, sublime poets are seldom, what we call, men of wit: Shakespeare is an exception; but he is a singular one. For wit arises from the discovery of minute relations and likenesses that had escaped the notice of others; and therefore a talent for it implies a habit of minute attention to circumstances and words: whereas a sublime genius directs his view chiefly to the great and more important phenomena of art and nature. They who excel in epigram have not often produced sublime verses: and Lord Chesterfield, who was a man of wit, and an epigrammatist, appears, from his letters, to have had no relish for the sublime poets.

Let it not be thought, because sublimity is one of the highest virtues of fine writing, that therefore no composition is excellent but what is sublime. A book, that partakes not of this quality at all, may please by its elegance, instruct by its doctrines, or amuse by its wit and humour, and in all, or in any of these respects, be truly valuable. Rivulets and meadows have their charms, as well as mountains and the ocean. Though Horace had never written any thing but his Epistles, in which there is no attempt at sublimity, he must always have been considered as an elegant and instructive poet.

\* See An Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition, chap. 2.

Nor think, because most of the preceding examples are taken from poetry, that the Sublime is peculiar to that art. In the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes; in the histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Livy; in the moral writings of Addison and Johnson, of Seneca, Plato, and Antoninus; and especially in the doctrinal and historical parts of Holy Writ, are many instances of the true Sublime, both in sentiment and description. The same thing may be said of almost every serious author, who composes with elegance.

Most of the writers on this subject have considered our passion for what is great and elevated, as a proof of the dignity of the soul, and of the glorious ends for which it was made. The words of Longinus to this purpose are well translated by Dr. Akenfide.

“ God has not intended man for an ignoble being; but, bringing  
 “ us into life, and the midst of this wide universe, as before a mul-  
 “ titude assembled at some heroick solemnity, that we might be spec-  
 “ tators of all his magnificence, and candidates high in emulation  
 “ for the prize of glory, has therefore implanted in our souls an  
 “ inextinguishable love of every thing great and exalted, of every  
 “ thing which appears divine beyond our comprehension. Whence  
 “ it comes to pass, that even the whole world is not an object suf-  
 “ ficient for the depth and rapidity of human imagination, which  
 “ often sallies forth beyond the limits of all that surrounds us. Let  
 “ any man cast his eye through the whole circle of our existence,  
 “ and consider how especially it abounds with excellent and grand  
 “ objects, and he will soon acknowledge for what enjoyments and  
 “ pursuits we were destined.”

These are the sentiments of a Pagan philosopher. And how noble, (I had almost said, how divine) must they appear, when compared with the selfish, sensual, and groveling ideas of the Epicurean, or with the narrow views and brutal insensibility of the ancient and modern Pyrrhonist!—I must not omit, that Addison  
 has

has adopted the same turn of thinking; and, enlightened with the knowledge, and warmed with the piety, of a Christian, has greatly improved it. “The Supreme Being,” says he, “has formed the soul of man, that nothing but Himself can be its last, adequate, and proper happiness. Because therefore a great part of our happiness must arise from the contemplation of his being, that he might give our souls a just relish of such a contemplation, he has made them naturally delight in the apprehension of what is great and unlimited. Our admiration, which is a very pleasing emotion of the mind, immediately rises at the consideration of any object that takes up a great deal of room in the fancy; and, by consequence, will improve into the highest pitch of astonishment and devotion, when we contemplate his nature, who is neither circumscribed by time or place, nor to be comprehended by the largest capacity of a created being.”

I shall only add, that our taste for the Sublime, cherished into a habit, and directed to proper objects, may, by preserving us from vice, which is the vilest of all things, and by recommending virtue for its intrinsic dignity, be useful in promoting our moral improvement. The same taste will also lead to the study of nature, which every where displays the sublimest appearances. And no study has a better effect upon the heart. For it keeps men at a distance from criminal pursuits, yields a variety of inoffensive and profitable amusement, and gives full demonstration of the infinite goodness and greatness of the adorable Creator.

T H E E N D.













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